

URVASHI

Urvashi's beauty takes King Pururavas' breath away. He is besotted. He forgets his duties as a king and is absent-minded with his wife, Aushinari. Both gods and humans are involved in the dramatic twists and turns of his romance with the charming apsara, who dances for Lord Indra himself. Eventually, stumbling through their highs and lows, King Pururavas and Urvashi finally find their way to everlasting joy.

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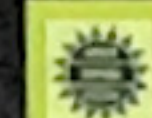
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URVASHI

THE APSARA WHO FELL IN LOVE WITH A KING

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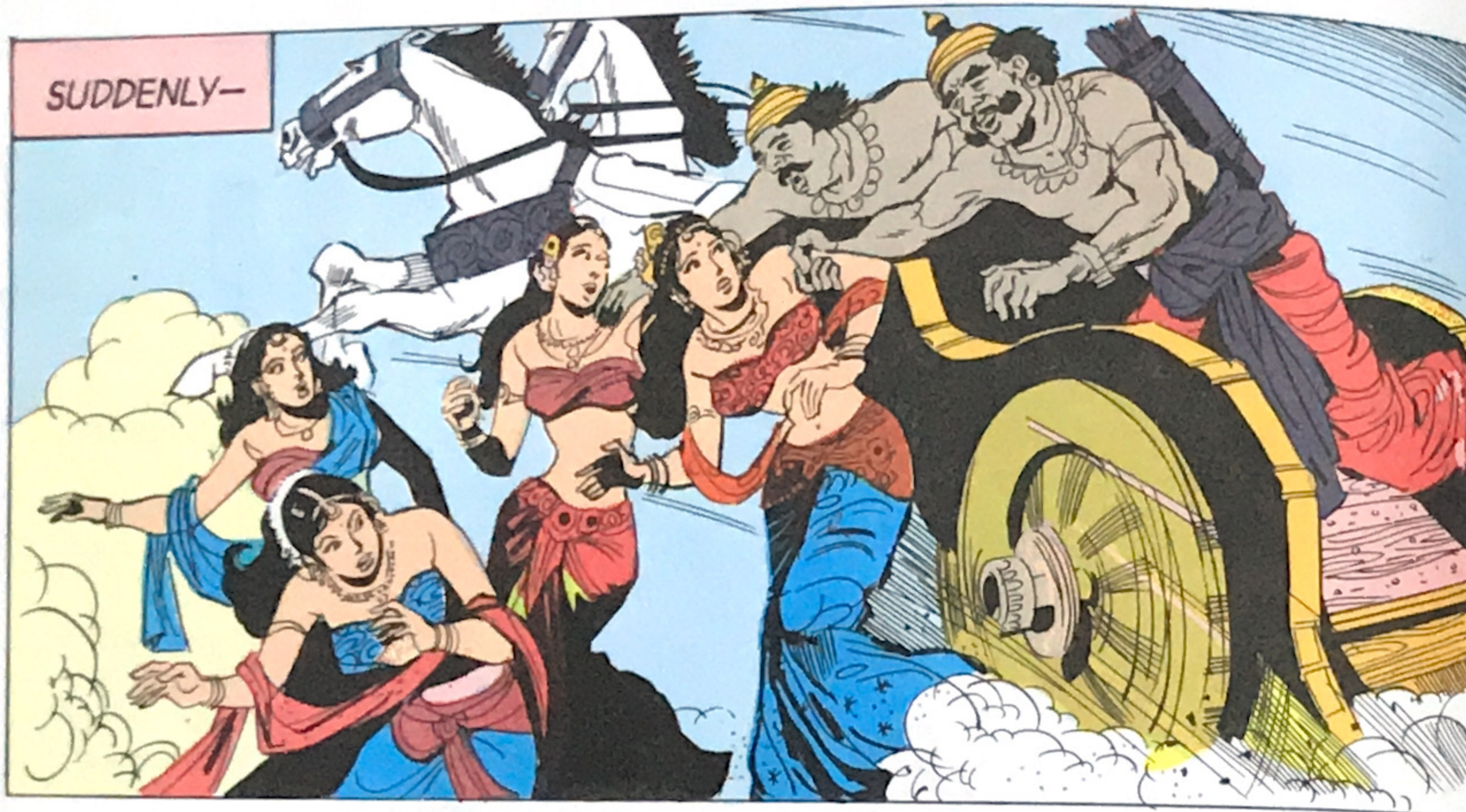
"Amar Chitra Kathas are a glorious tribute to India's rich cultural heritage. These books have been an integral part of my children's early years, as they have been for many other families across India. Comics are a great way of reaching out to children, inculcating reading habits and driving their quest to learn more about our roots."

- NARAYAN MURTHY, CHIEF MENTOR, INFOSYS

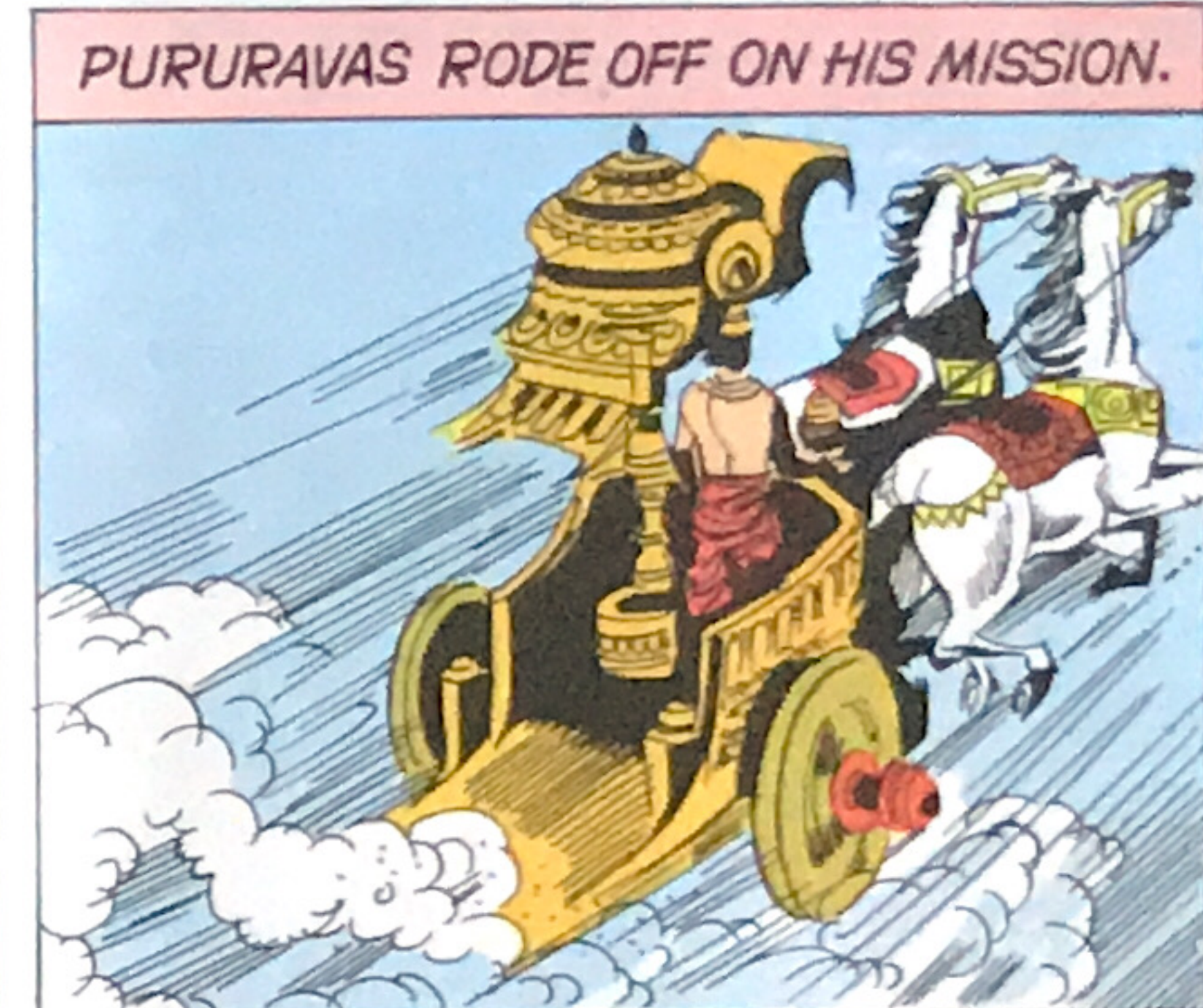
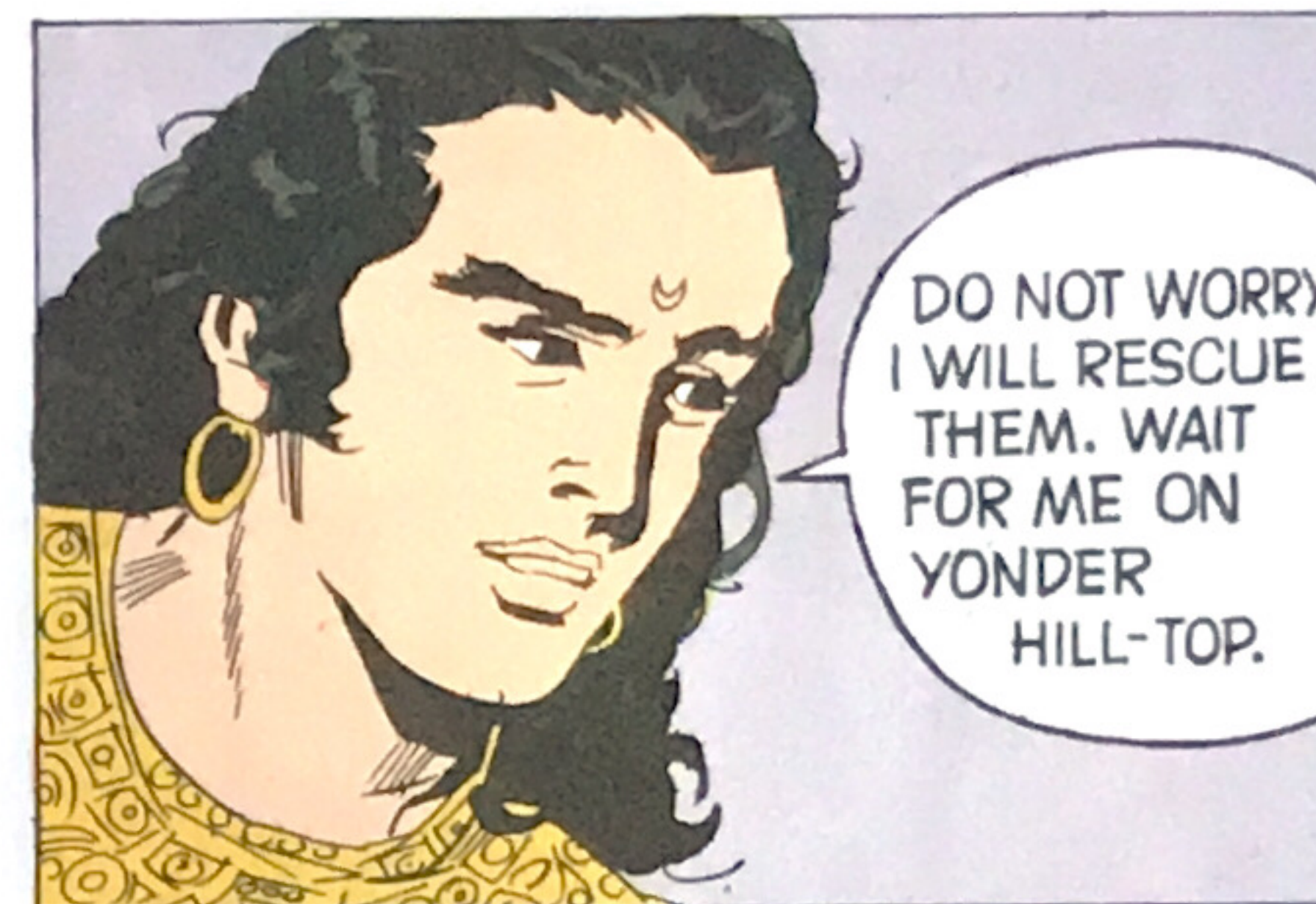
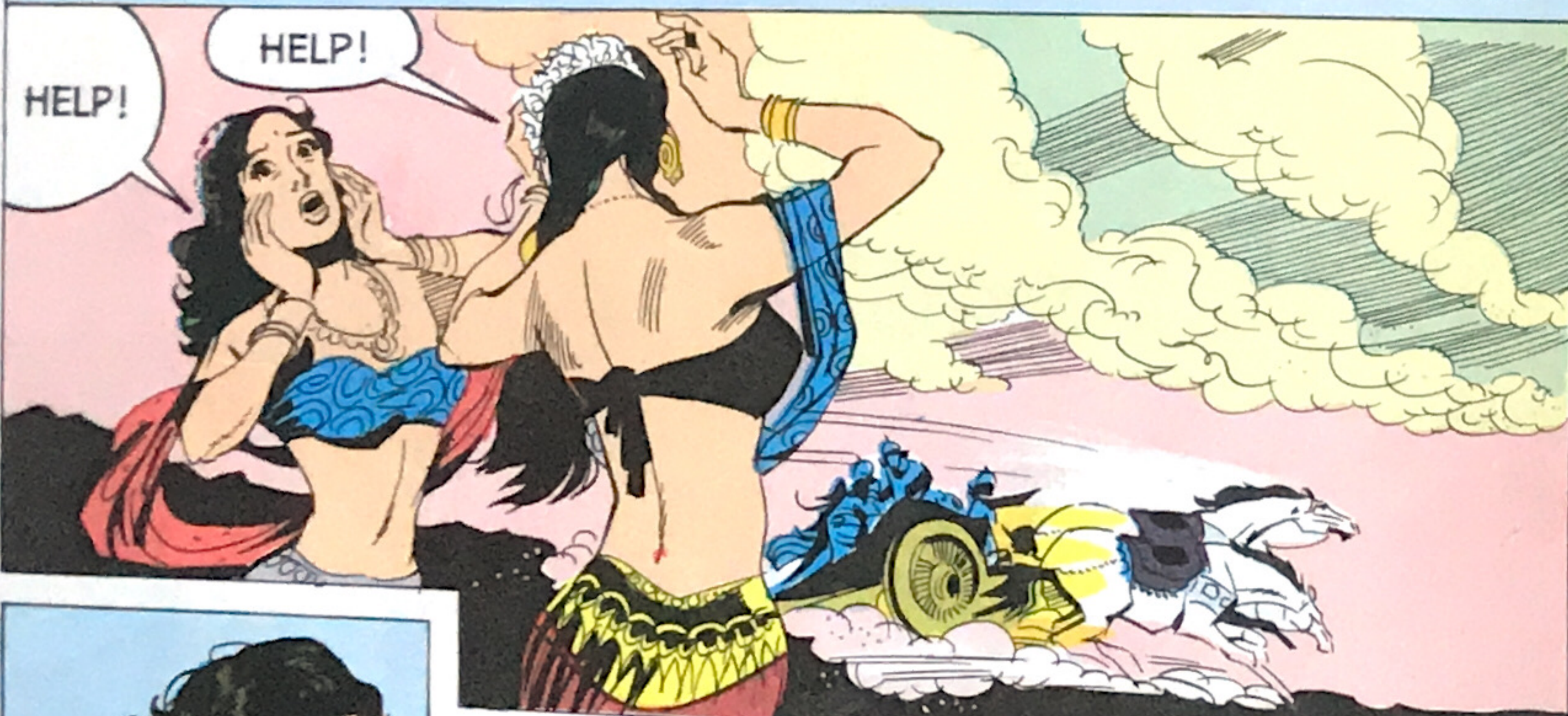
URVASHI

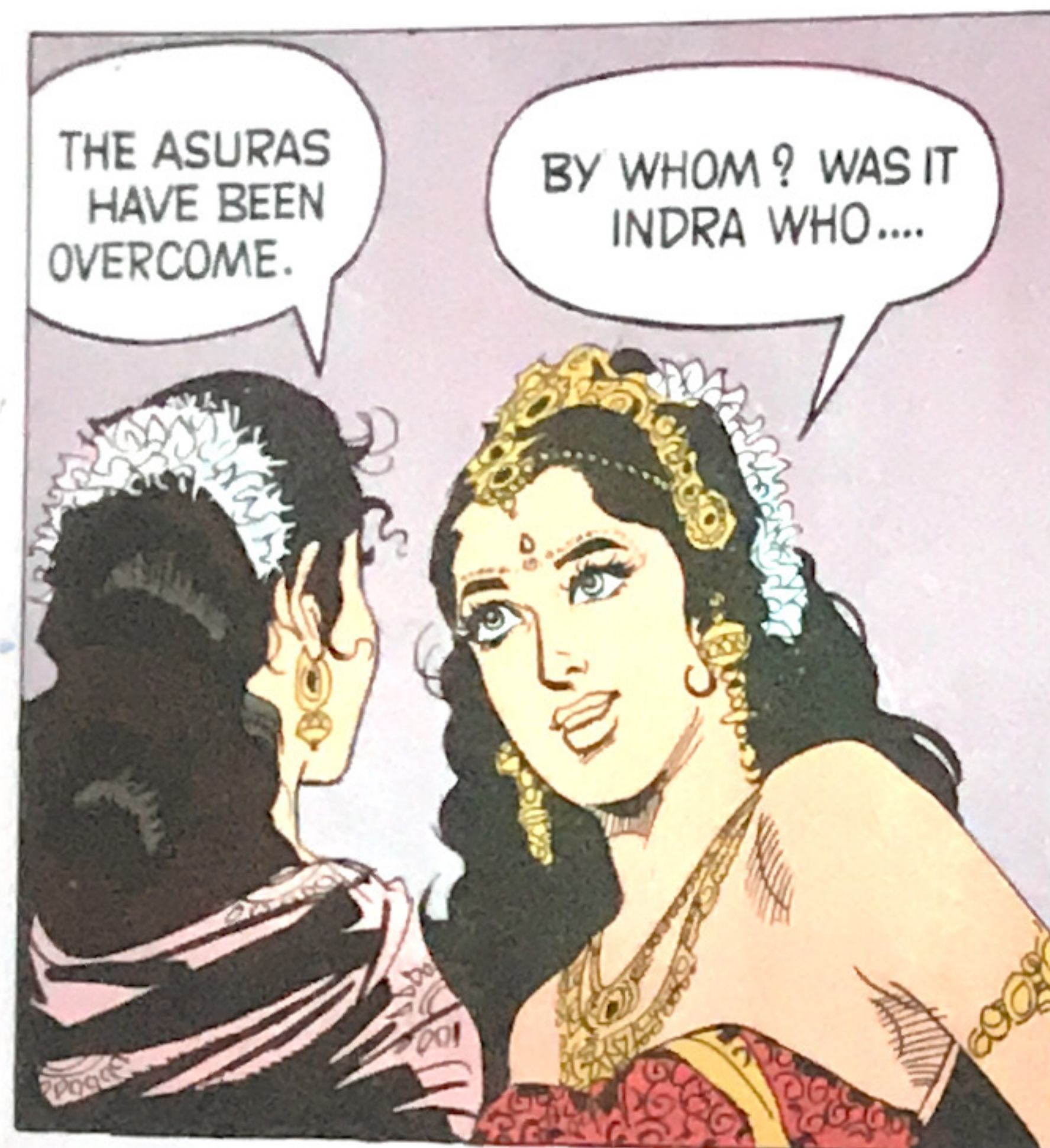


URVASHI, THE PEERLESS CELESTIAL DANCER, WAS THE FAVOURITE OF INDRA. ONCE, AFTER DANCING IN THE HALLS OF KUBERA, SHE WAS RETURNING HOME ACCOMPANIED BY A FEW OTHER APSARAS.



THE ASURAS CARRIED OFF URVASHI AND HER CLOSE COMPANION, CHITRALEKHA.





THE ASURAS
HAVE BEEN
OVERCOME.

BY WHOM? WAS IT
INDRA WHO....



IT WAS PURURAVAS, THE
MIGHTY. EVEN INDRA HAS
SOUGHT HIS AID WHEN
HARD-PRESSED IN
BATTLE.

URVASHI LOOKED UP AND HER
EYES MET THOSE OF PURURAVAS.

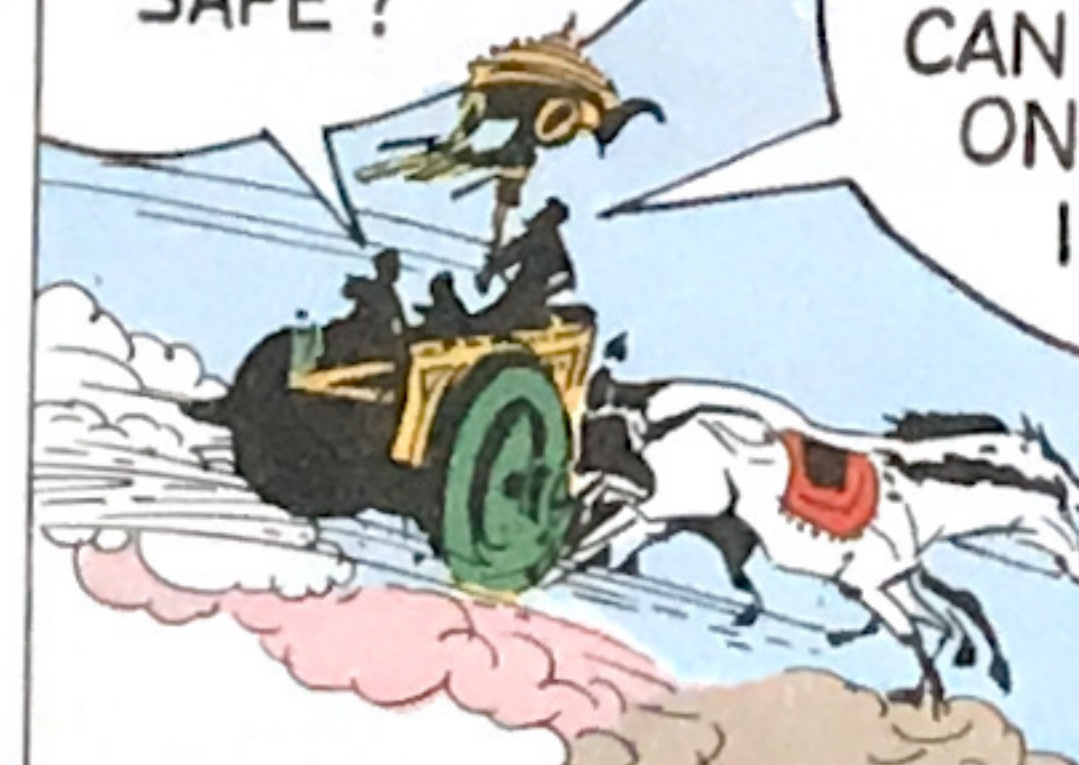
WHAT A NOBLE MAN!
THE ASURAS HAVE
DONE ME A FAVOUR.



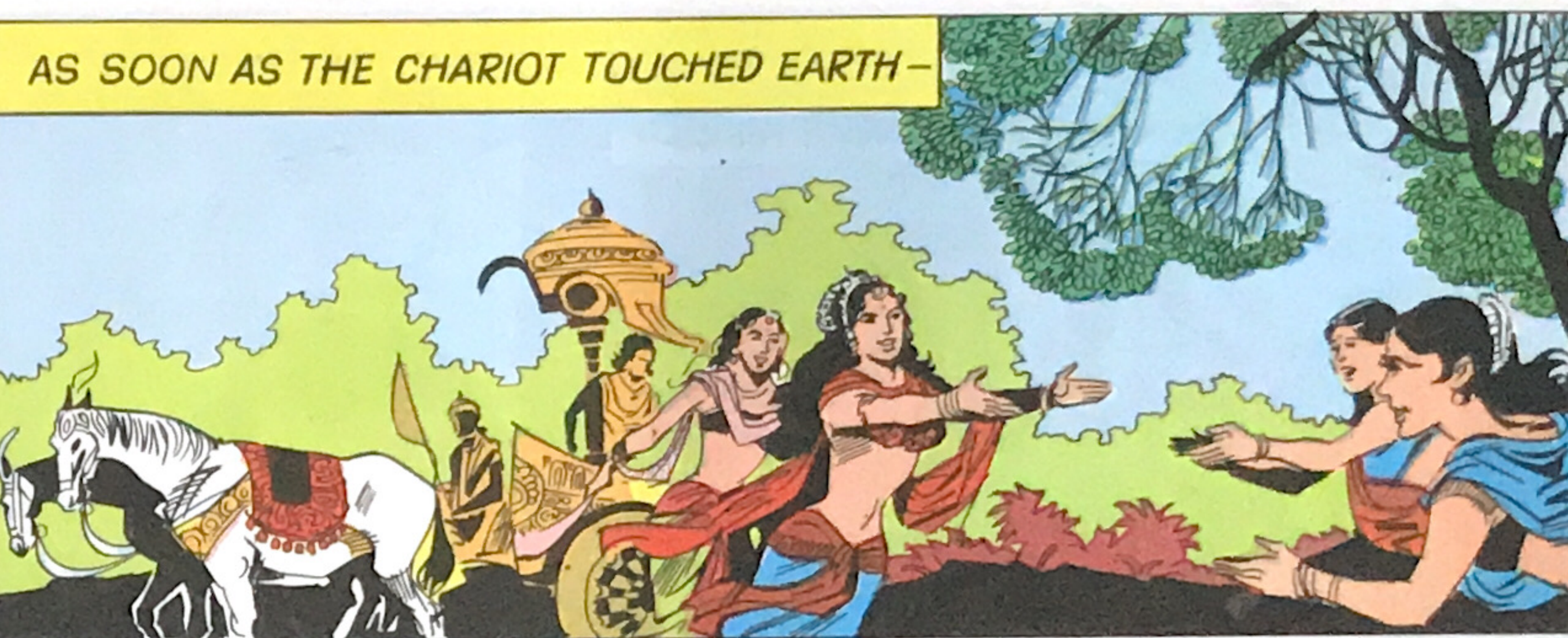
NEVER HAVE
I BEHELD SUCH
BEAUTY!

SUDDENLY URVASHI REMEMBERED
HER COMPANIONS.

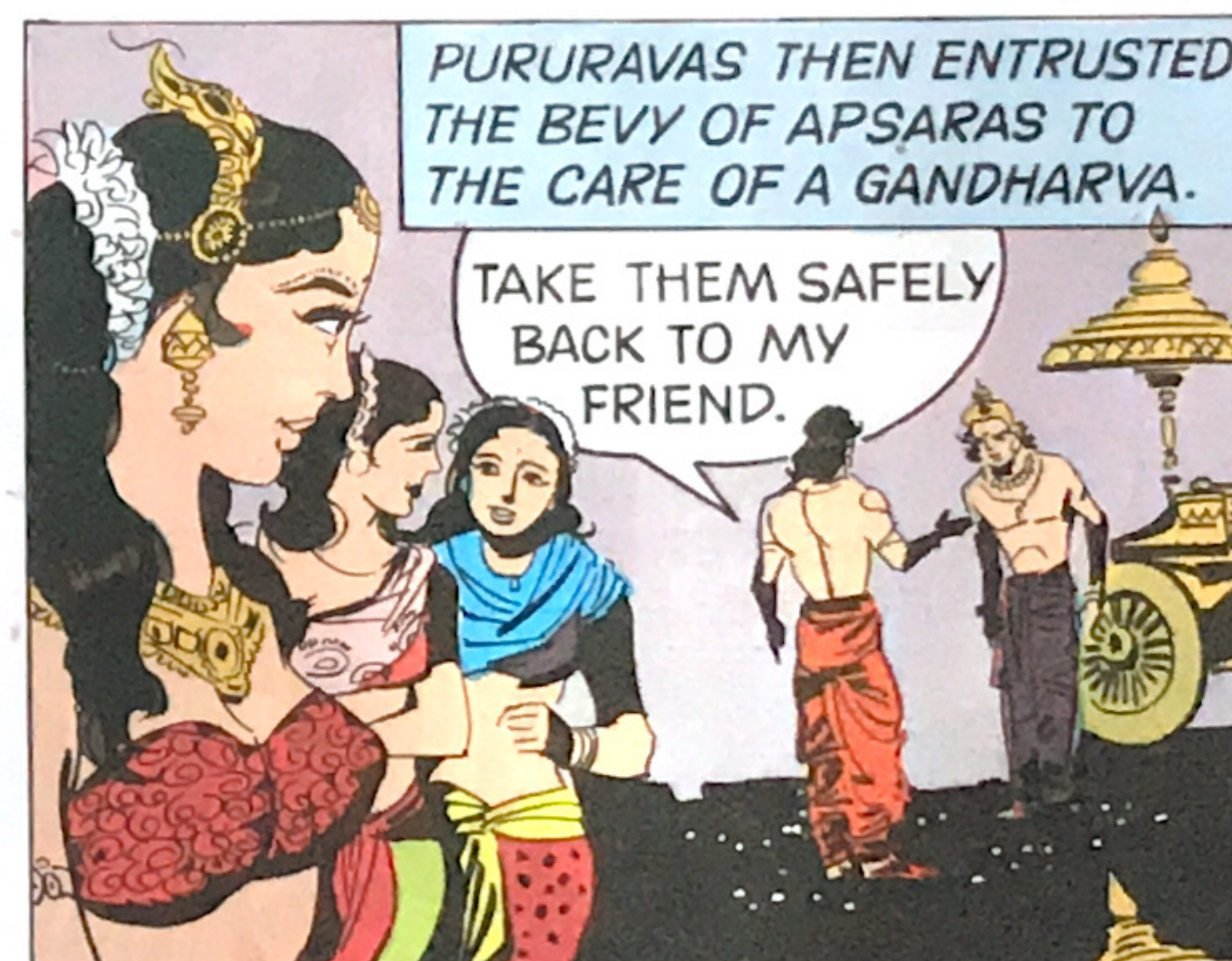
OUR FRIENDS?
ARE THEY
SAFE?



YES, THERE THEY ARE.
CAN YOU SEE THEM
ON THAT PEAK WAIT-
ING TO RECEIVE
YOU?



AS SOON AS THE CHARIOT TOUCHED EARTH—



PURURAVAS THEN ENTRUSTED
THE BEVY OF APSARAS TO
THE CARE OF A GANDHARVA.

TAKE THEM SAFELY
BACK TO MY
FRIEND.

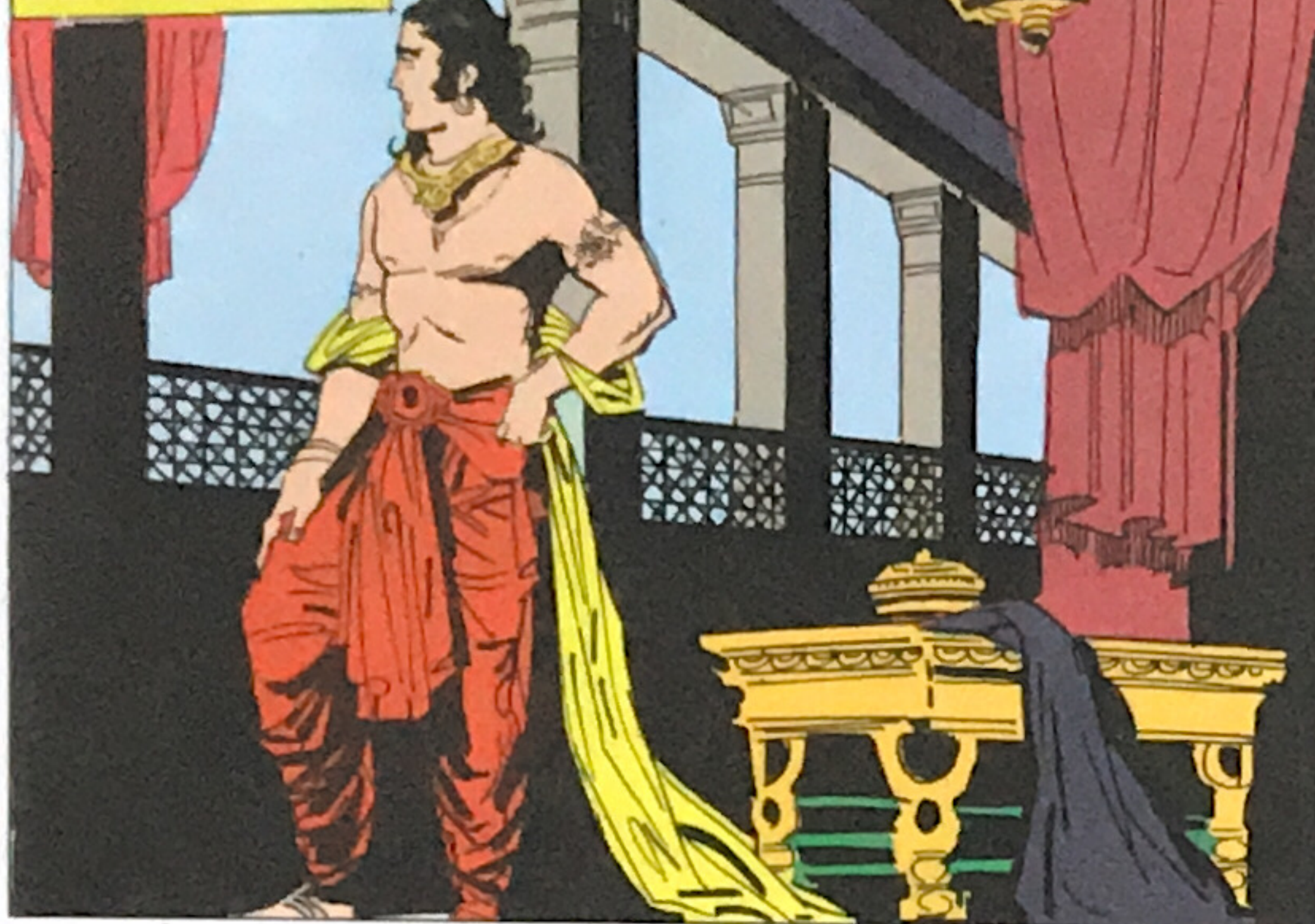
AS THE GANDHARVA'S
CHARIOT SOARED INTO
THE SKY —

MY NOBLE
KING, WILL I
EVER SEE
YOU
AGAIN?



SWEET URVASHI,
HAVING STOLEN
MY HEART YOU
ARE TAKING
MY VERY BEING
WITH YOU.

PURURAVAS RETURNED TO HIS PALACE AT PRATISHTHANA. BUT NOT FOR A MOMENT COULD HE TAKE HIS MIND OFF URVASHI. HE BECAME MOODY AND MOROSE.



HIS FRIEND AND ADVISER, MANAVAKA, WAS CURIOUS.

WHAT AILS YOU, SIR?

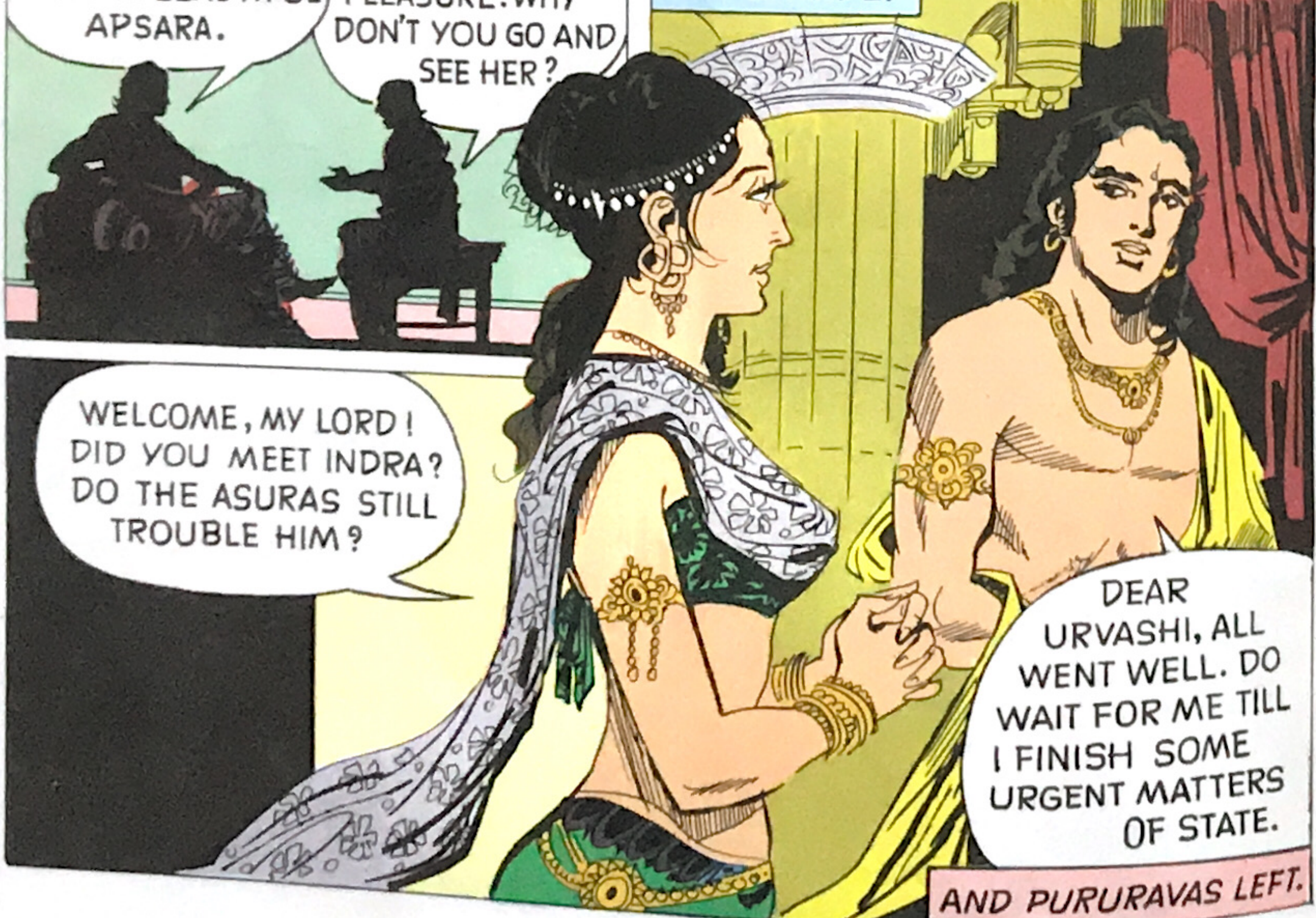


PURURAVAS TOLD MANAVAKA ALL.

...AND NOW I AM SICK WITH LONGING FOR THE BEAUTIFUL APSARA.

YOUR QUEEN AWAILS YOUR PLEASURE. WHY DON'T YOU GO AND SEE HER?

PURURAVAS FELT GUILTY. HE HAD NOT SEEN HIS WIFE AUSHINARI SINCE HIS RETURN. HE HASTENED TO HER SIDE.

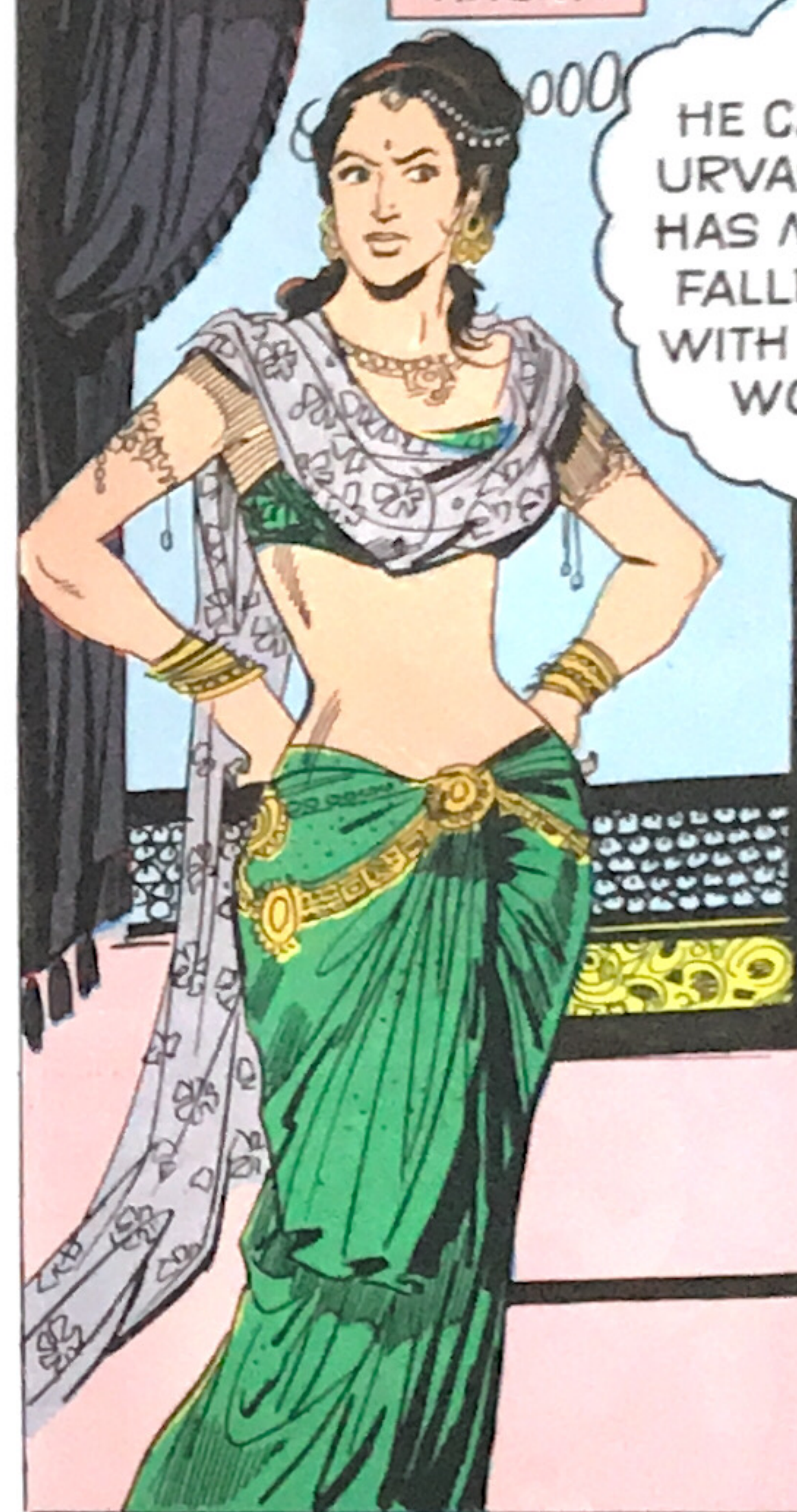


WELCOME, MY LORD! DID YOU MEET INDRA? DO THE ASURAS STILL TROUBLE HIM?

DEAR URVASHI, ALL WENT WELL. DO WAIT FOR ME TILL I FINISH SOME URGENT MATTERS OF STATE.

AND PURURAVAS LEFT.

AUSHINARI WAS HURT AND ANGRY.



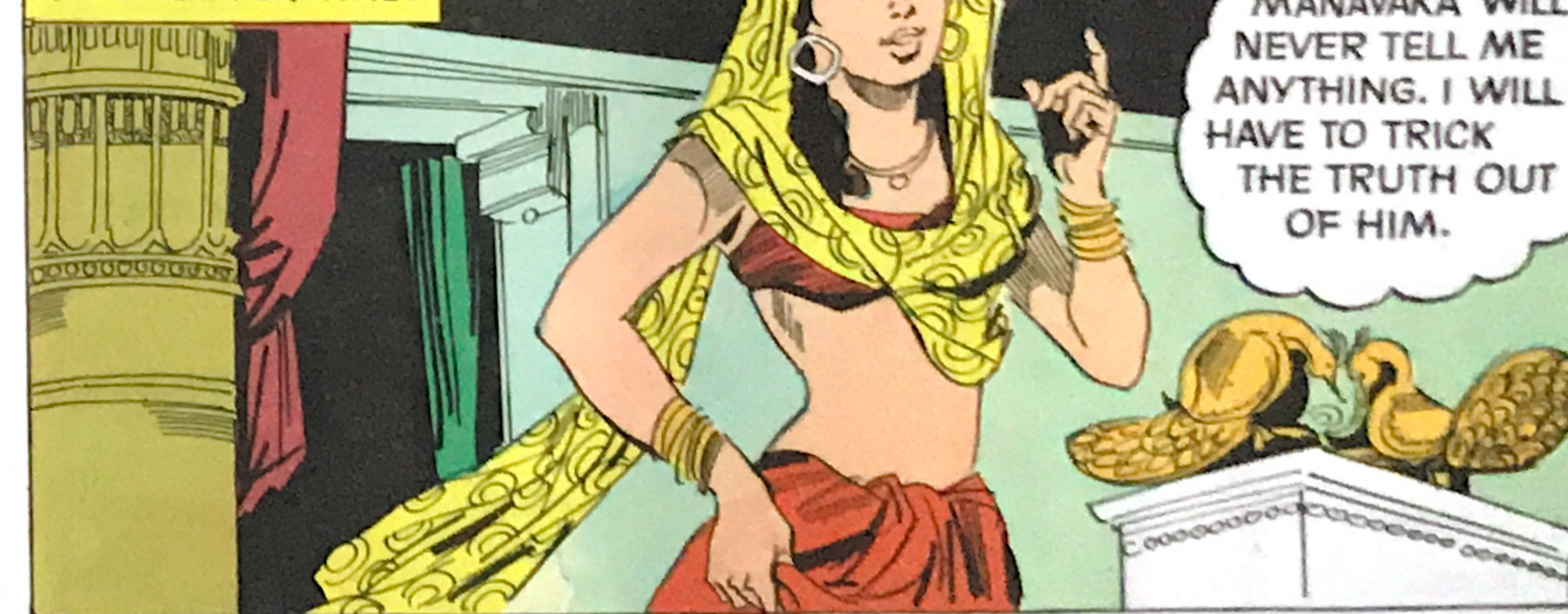
HE CALLED ME URVASHI. ALAS! HAS MY HUSBAND FALLEN IN LOVE WITH ANOTHER WOMAN?

SHE SENT FOR HER FAVOURITE MAID NIPUNIKA.

NIPUNIKA, OF LATE THE KING HAS BECOME FORGETFUL. GO AND FIND OUT FROM HIS DEAR FRIEND, MANAVAKA, THE REASON FOR THIS AILMENT.



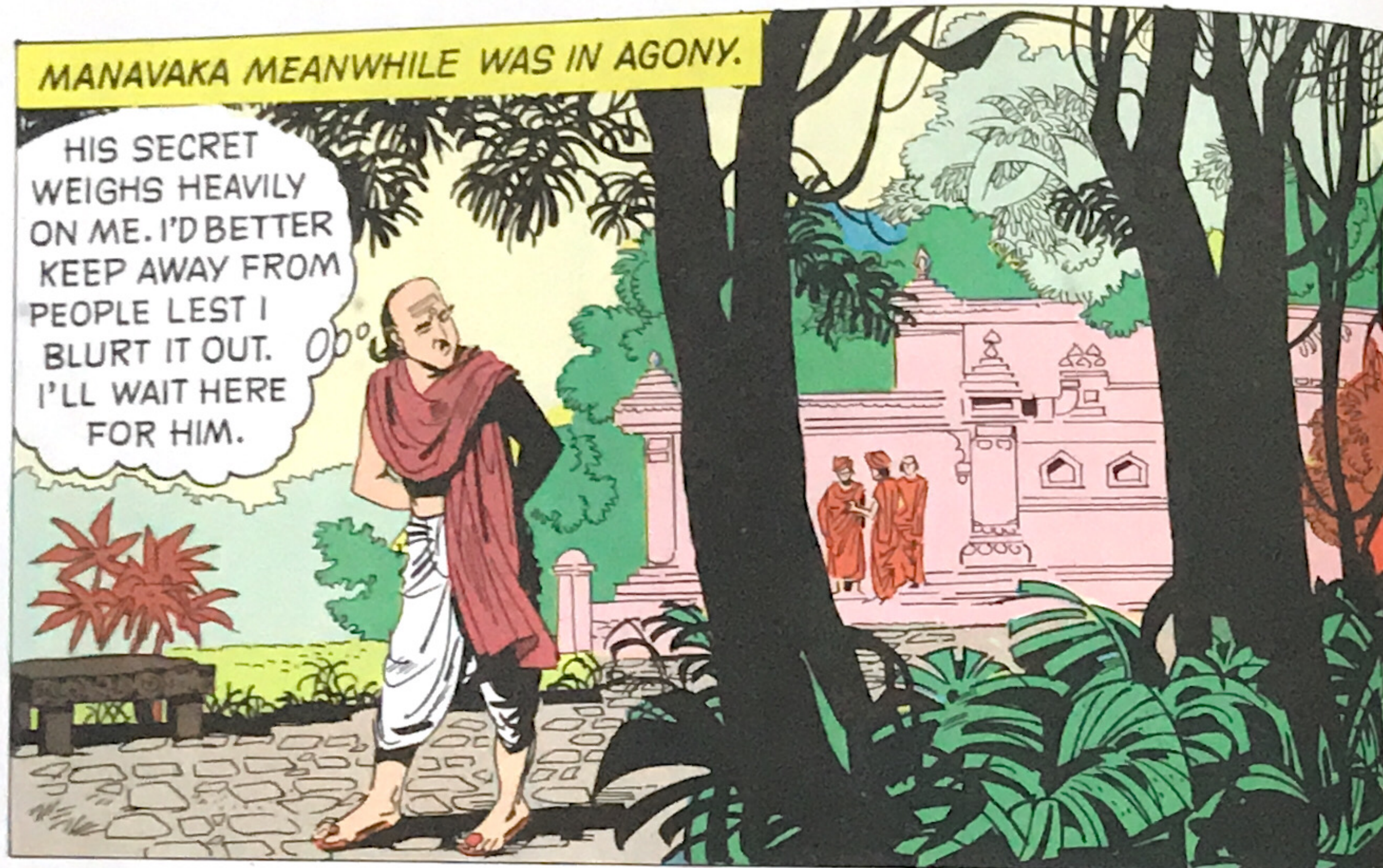
NIPUNIKA WAS SHREWD AND IMMEDIATELY GUESSED WHAT THE MATTER WAS.



MANAVAKA WILL NEVER TELL ME ANYTHING. I WILL HAVE TO TRICK THE TRUTH OUT OF HIM.

MANAVAKA MEANWHILE WAS IN AGONY.

HIS SECRET WEIGHS HEAVILY ON ME. I'D BETTER KEEP AWAY FROM PEOPLE LEST I BLURT IT OUT. I'LL WAIT HERE FOR HIM.



NIPUNIKA TRACKED HIM DOWN AS HE SAT WORRYING ABOUT KEEPING THE SECRET.

NOBLE SIR, THE QUEEN IS HEART-BROKEN AND CANNOT BE CONSOLED.

WHY? HAS MY FRIEND OFFENDED HER IN ANY WAY?



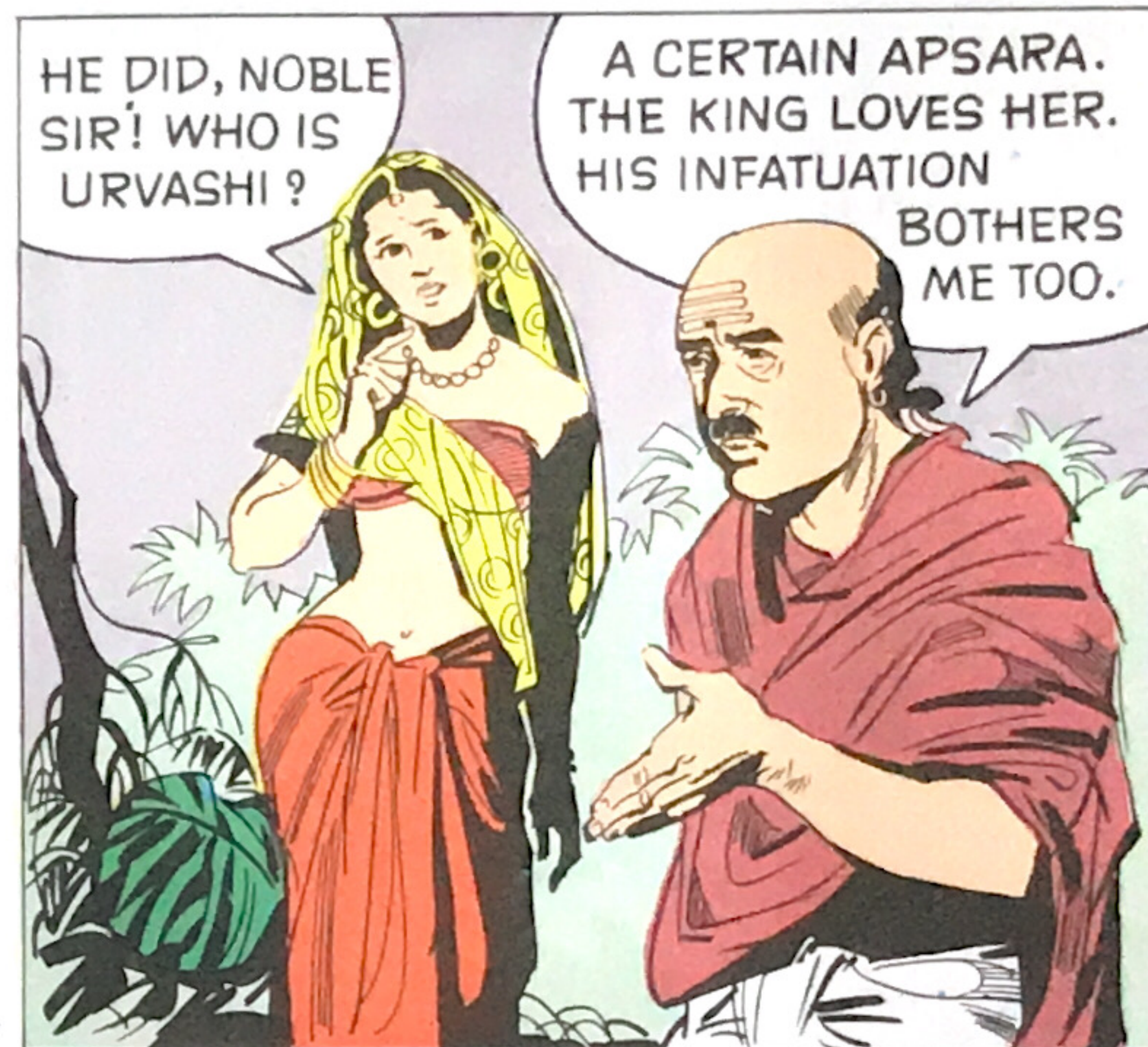
IT SEEMS HE ADDRESSED HER BY THE NAME OF THAT WOMAN FOR WHOM HE IS PINING

WHAT! HE CALLED HER URVASHI?



HE DID, NOBLE SIR! WHO IS URVASHI?

A CERTAIN APSARA. THE KING LOVES HER. HIS INFATUATION BOTHERS ME TOO.



SO THAT'S IT!

BUT WHAT SHALL I SAY TO THE QUEEN?

TELL HER I AM TRYING MY BEST TO DISTRACT HIM. I WILL NOT SEE HER TILL I'VE SUCCEEDED.

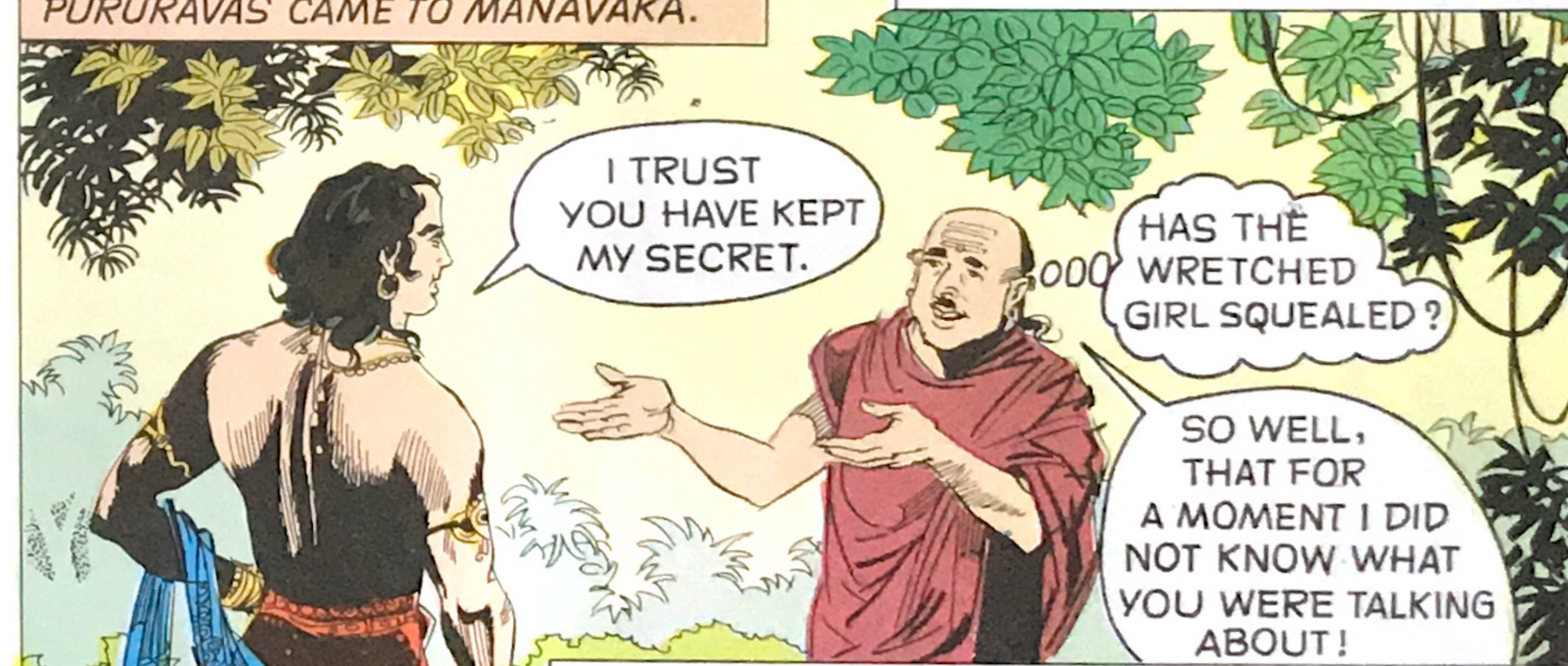


HARDLY HAD NIPUNIKA LEFT, WHEN PURURAVAS CAME TO MANAVAKA.

I TRUST YOU HAVE KEPT MY SECRET.

HAS THE WRETCHED GIRL SQUEALED?

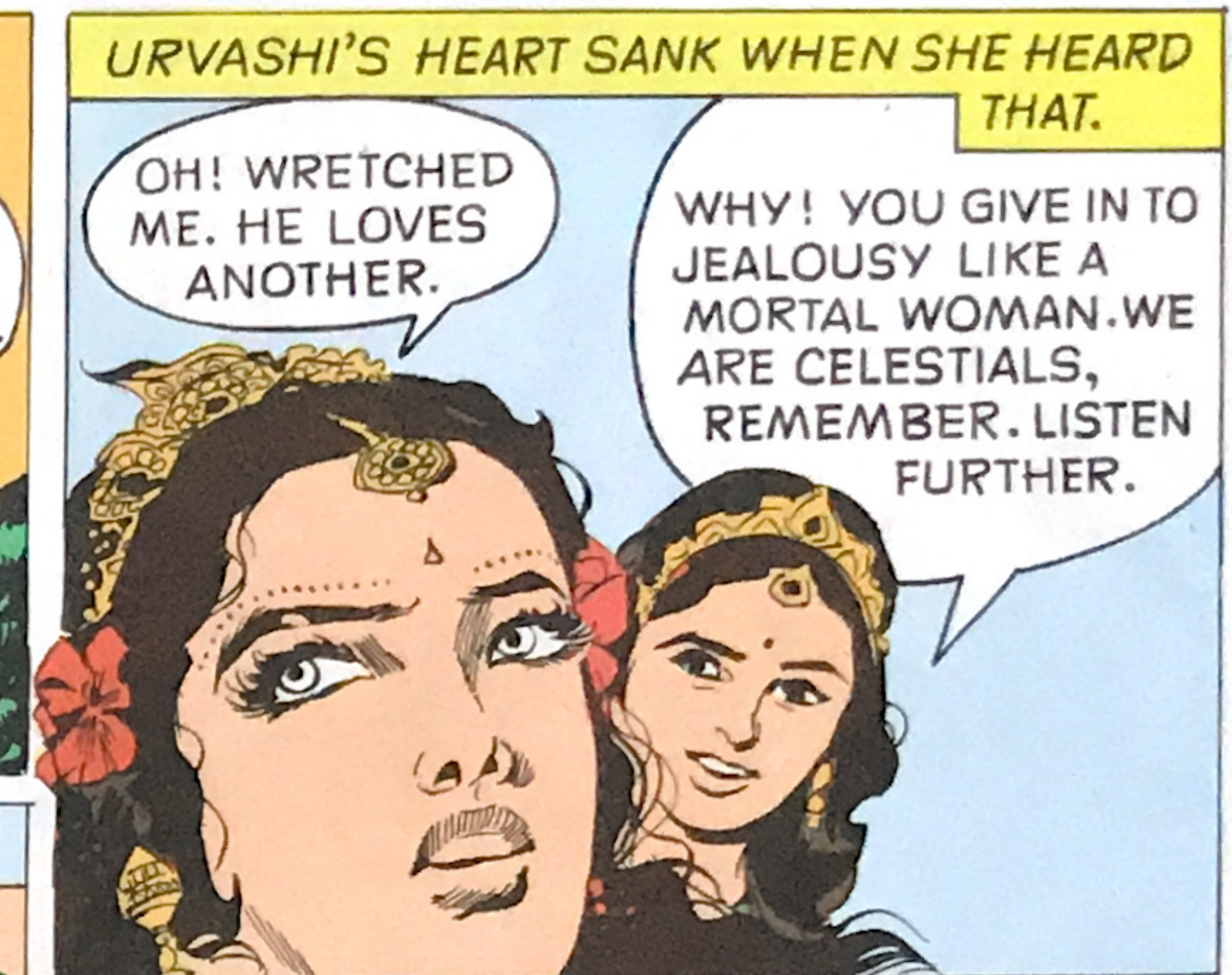
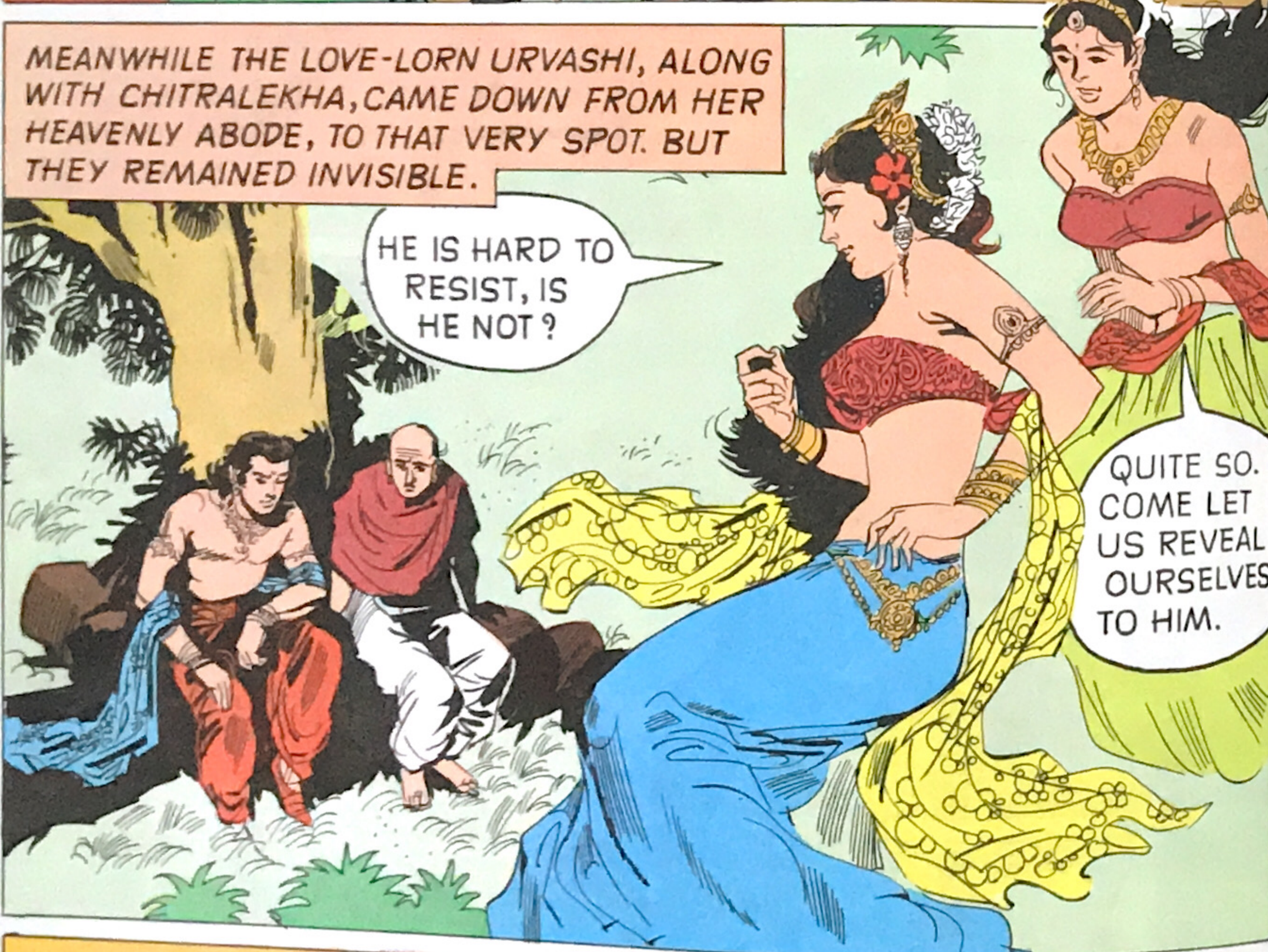
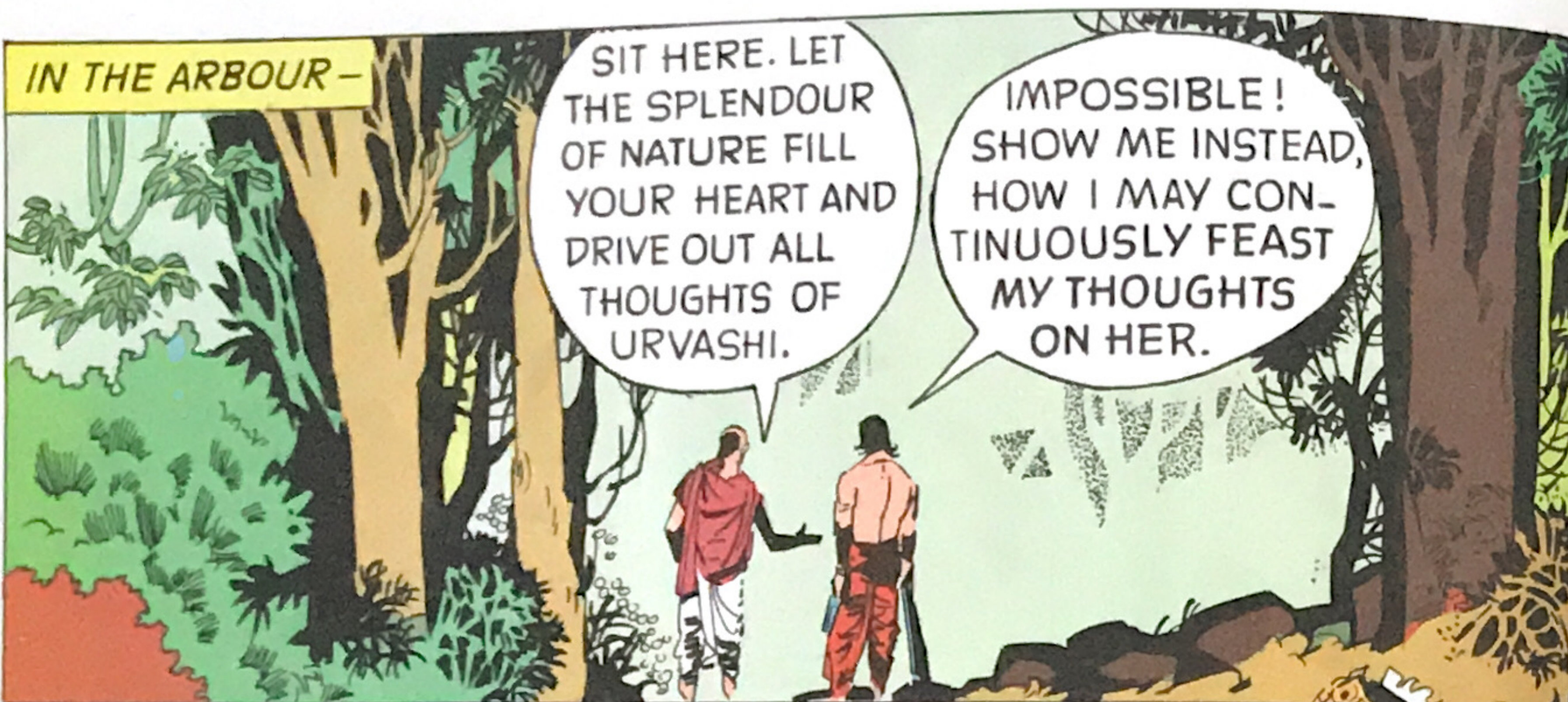
SO WELL, THAT FOR A MOMENT I DID NOT KNOW WHAT YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT!



PURURAVAS WAS SATISFIED.

I DESIRE SOLITUDE. COME LET US GO TO THE ARBOUR IN MY GARDEN.





CHITRALEKHA NUDGED URVASHI.

DID YOU HEAR THAT?

I CANNOT BEAR IT ANY LONGER. COME, FIND ME A LEAF AND I SHALL LET HIM KNOW MY HEART'S LONGING.

CHITRALEKHA BROUGHT HER THE LEAF AND URVASHI WROTE HER MESSAGE ON IT.

PURURAVAS AND MANAVAKA STARTED IN SURPRISE AS THE LEAF FELL BETWEEN THEM.

PURURAVAS READ IT AND HIS FACE LIT UP WITH JOY.

YOU ARE RIGHT. IT IS A DECLARATION OF HER LOVE.

YOU ARE CONTENT NOW, I HOPE.

PLEASE HOLD THE LEAF. MY CLUMSY HANDS MIGHT ERASE THE SWEET LETTERS.

BUT WHY DOESN'T YOUR MISTRESS SHOW HERSELF?

A LEAF? WITH WRITING?

PERHAPS SHE HEARD YOUR LAMENT AND HAS ANSWERED.

AT THAT MOMENT CHITRALEKHA AND URVASHI REVEALED THEMSELVES.

URVASHI! I AM THE MOST FORTUNATE MAN ON EARTH. I HAVE WON YOUR LOVE.

JUST AS PURURAVAS TOOK HER HANDS IN HIS, A MESSENGER FROM THE COURT OF INDRA STOOD BEFORE THEM.

CHITRALEKHA! URVASHI! HURRY. INDRA AWAITS YOU. HE WANTS YOU TO DANCE LAXMI'S CHOICE FOR HIM.

AS URVASHI WENT -

WHAT?... OH!... THE LEAF. IT IS GONE. IT MUST HAVE FLOWN AFTER URVASHI.

SHE IS GONE. OF WHAT USE ARE MY EYES TO ME NOW? AH! THE LETTER. WHERE IS MY LEAF?

I MUST NOT DETAIN YOU WHEN INDRA HIMSELF HAS SENT FOR YOU. BUT THINK OF ME SOMETIMES.

I SHALL - ALWAYS.

PURURAVAS WAS ANNOYED—

HOW CARELESS
OF YOU!

OH! WELL!
IT CAN'T BE FAR.
I'LL LOOK FOR IT.

SUDDENLY—

WHAT IS
THIS? A
LEAF WITH
SOMETHING
SCRIBBLED
ON IT!

A LOVE
LETTER FROM
THAT APSARA,
NO DOUBT. SEE!
THERE THEY
ARE, SEARCHING
FOR IT.

ALAS! I HAVE
LOST ALL THAT
WAS PRECI-
OUS TO
ME.

AUSHINARI COULD NOT CONTAIN HER JEALOUSY
ANY LONGER.

DO NOT BE SO
DESPERATE.
HERE IS YOUR
PRECIOUS
LETTER.

MY QUEEN!
HERE! WELCOME
TO YOU.

WHILE THEY WERE BUSY SEARCHING—

AH! LET ME
HIDE HERE
AND LEARN THE
TRUTH FOR MYSELF.

AS YOU
PLEASE,
MISTRESS.

BUT AUSHINARI WAS HAUGHTY AND COLD.

I AM SORRY
FOR FORCING MY
UNWELCOME PRE-
SENCE ON YOU.

SHE TURNED TO GO AWAY.

DEAR QUEEN,
I'M GUILTY. PLEASE
FORGIVE ME.

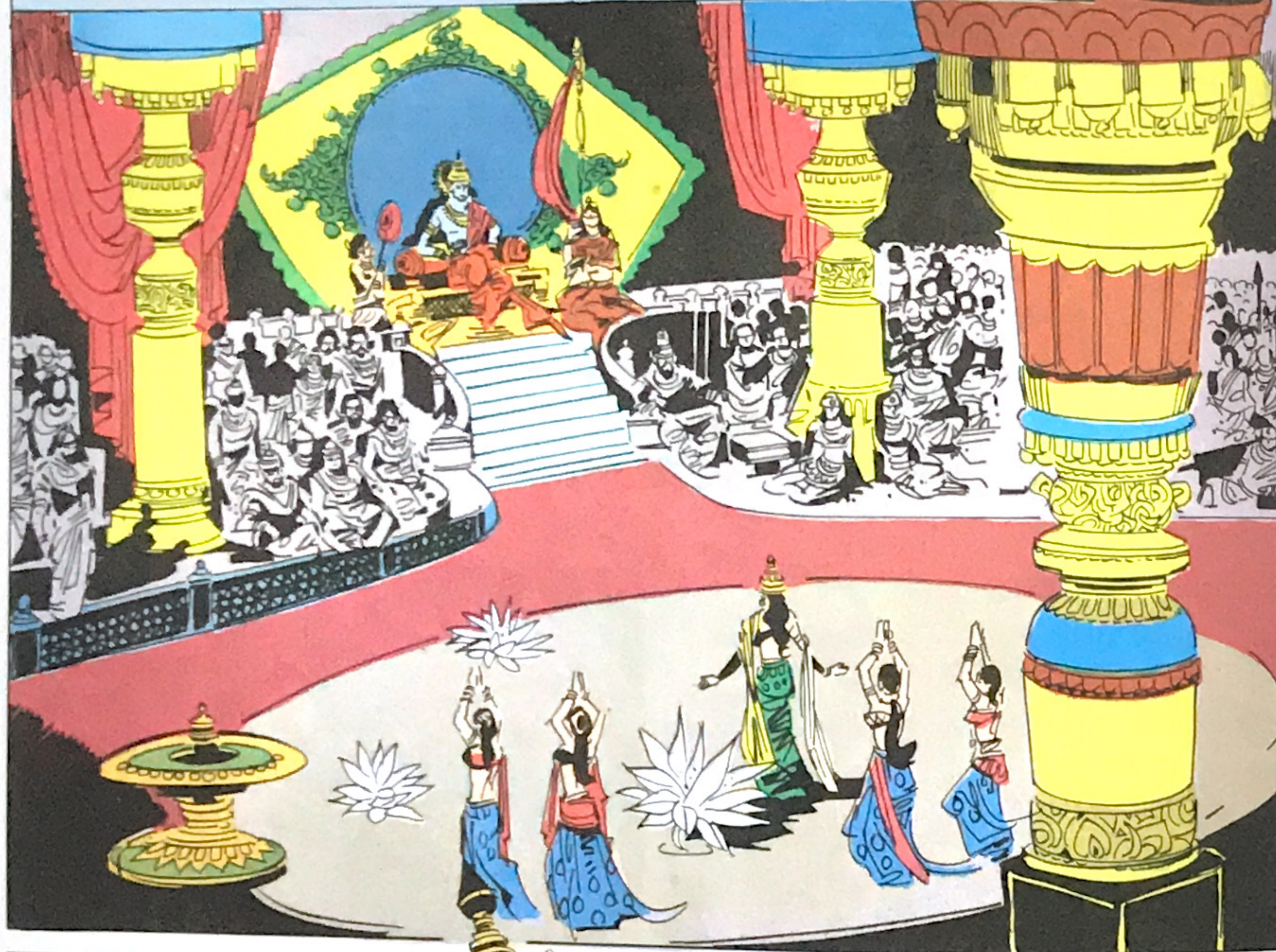
AUSHINARI WALKED AWAY,
FOLLOWED BY NIPUNIKA.

AUSHINARI WAS IN TWO MINDS.

I SHOULD NOT BE
WEAK-MINDED
AND ACCEPT
HIS HOLLOW APO-
LOGY. YET I CAN-
NOT BEAR TO
HURT HIM.
BUT, NO....

WELL, SHE HAS REASON TO
SPURN ME. THOUGH I LOVE
URVASHI, I AM FOND OF HER
TOO, AND HATE TO HURT
HER. I WILL WAIT PATIENTLY
TILL HER ANGER HAS
COOLED DOWN.

MEANWHILE IN INDRA'S COURT, URVASHI'S DANCE WAS ON.



URVASHI PLAYED THE PART OF LAXMI. AS THE DANCE PROGRESS-ED—

OF ALL THE GODS ASSEMBLED HERE, TO WHOM DOES YOUR HEART BELONG ?

PURURAVAS !

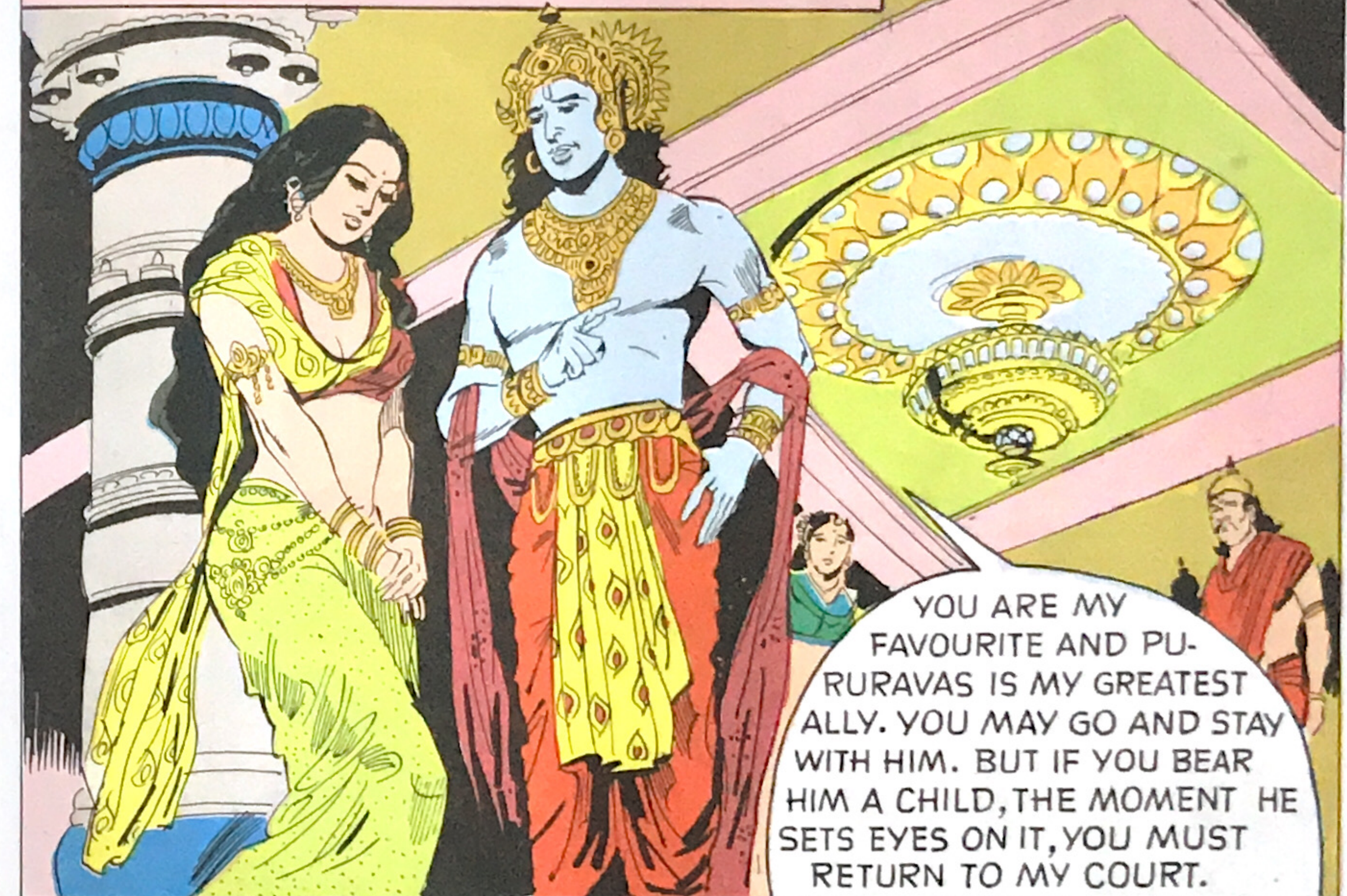


THE LOVE-STRUCK URVASHI HAD UTTERED THE NAME OF HER BELOVED INSTEAD OF REPLYING "PURUSHOTTAM." SAGE BHARATA, HER GURU, WAS FURIOUS.

YOU HAVE PUT ME TO SHAME ! I BANISH YOU FROM HEAVEN.



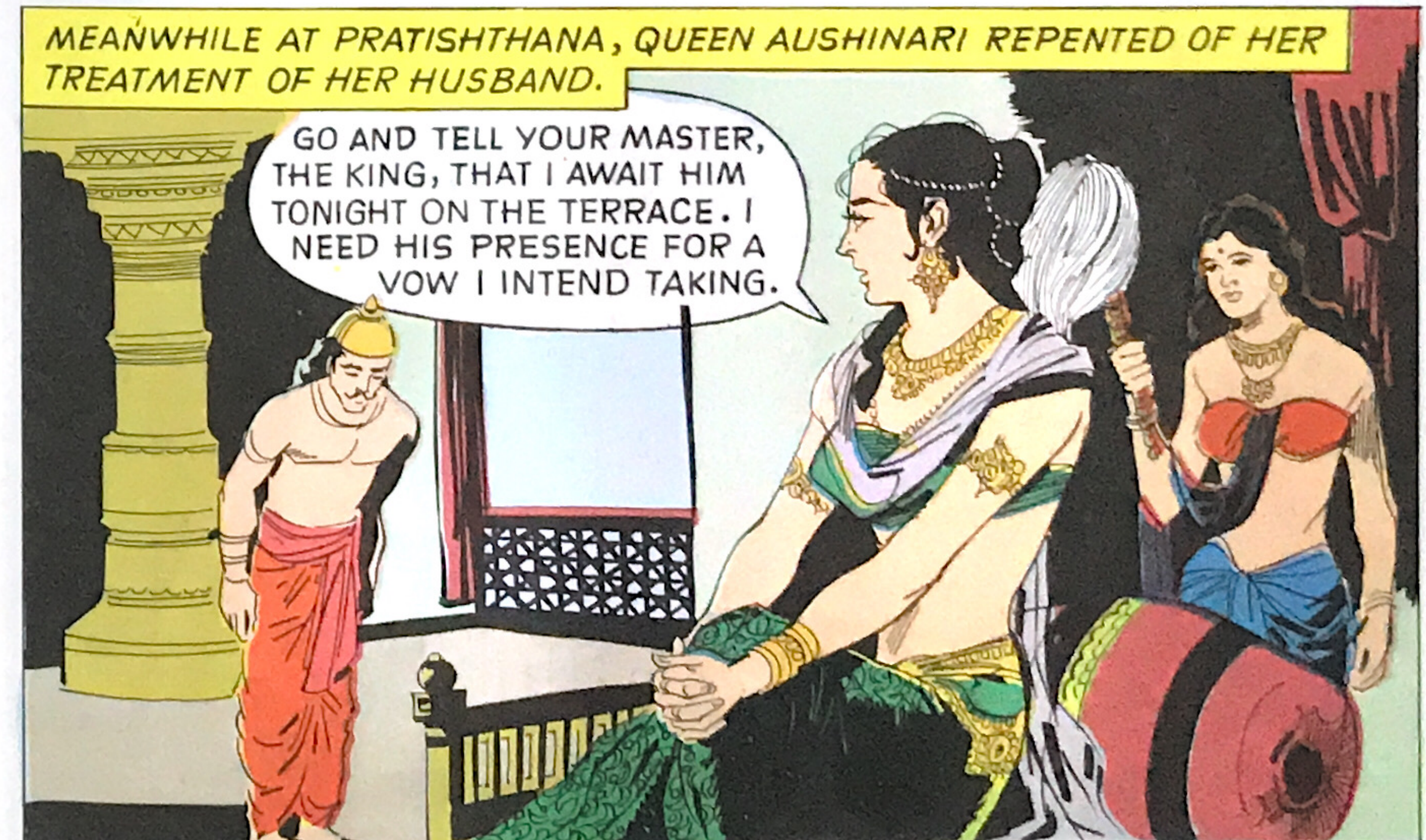
AFTER THE DANCE WAS OVER, INDRA SAW URVASHI, HER HEAD BENT LOW, STANDING ALONE IN A CORNER. HE WAS MOVED.



YOU ARE MY FAVOURITE AND PURURAVAS IS MY GREATEST ALLY. YOU MAY GO AND STAY WITH HIM. BUT IF YOU BEAR HIM A CHILD, THE MOMENT HE SETS EYES ON IT, YOU MUST RETURN TO MY COURT.

MEANWHILE AT PRATISHTHANA, QUEEN AUSHINARI REPENTED OF HER TREATMENT OF HER HUSBAND.

GO AND TELL YOUR MASTER, THE KING, THAT I AWAIT HIM TONIGHT ON THE TERRACE. I NEED HIS PRESENCE FOR A VOW I INTEND TAKING.



WHEN THE MESSAGE WAS GIVEN—



AT THAT VERY MOMENT THE BANISHED URVASHI ACCOMPANIED BY CHITRALEKHA WAS ON HER WAY TO PURURAVAS.



PURURAVAS AND MANAVAKA ARRIVED ON THE TERRACE BEFORE THE APPOINTED HOUR.



LOOK! THERE HE IS ALONE WITH HIS FRIEND. LET US APPROACH HIM AND SHOW OURSELVES.



AS THEY WERE ABOUT TO PRESENT THEMSELVES TO PURURAVAS—



THE QUEEN ADVANCED.



AUSHINARI'S REGAL BEARING AND EXQUISITE BEAUTY IMPRESSED URVASHI.

SHE IS MAJESTIC!

URVASHI'S SOUL IS PURE AND LOFTY. I'M PROUD OF HER.



AUSHINARI THEN TOOK HER VOW.



PURURAVAS WAS OVERWHELMED.



SHE TURNED TO HER MAIDS.

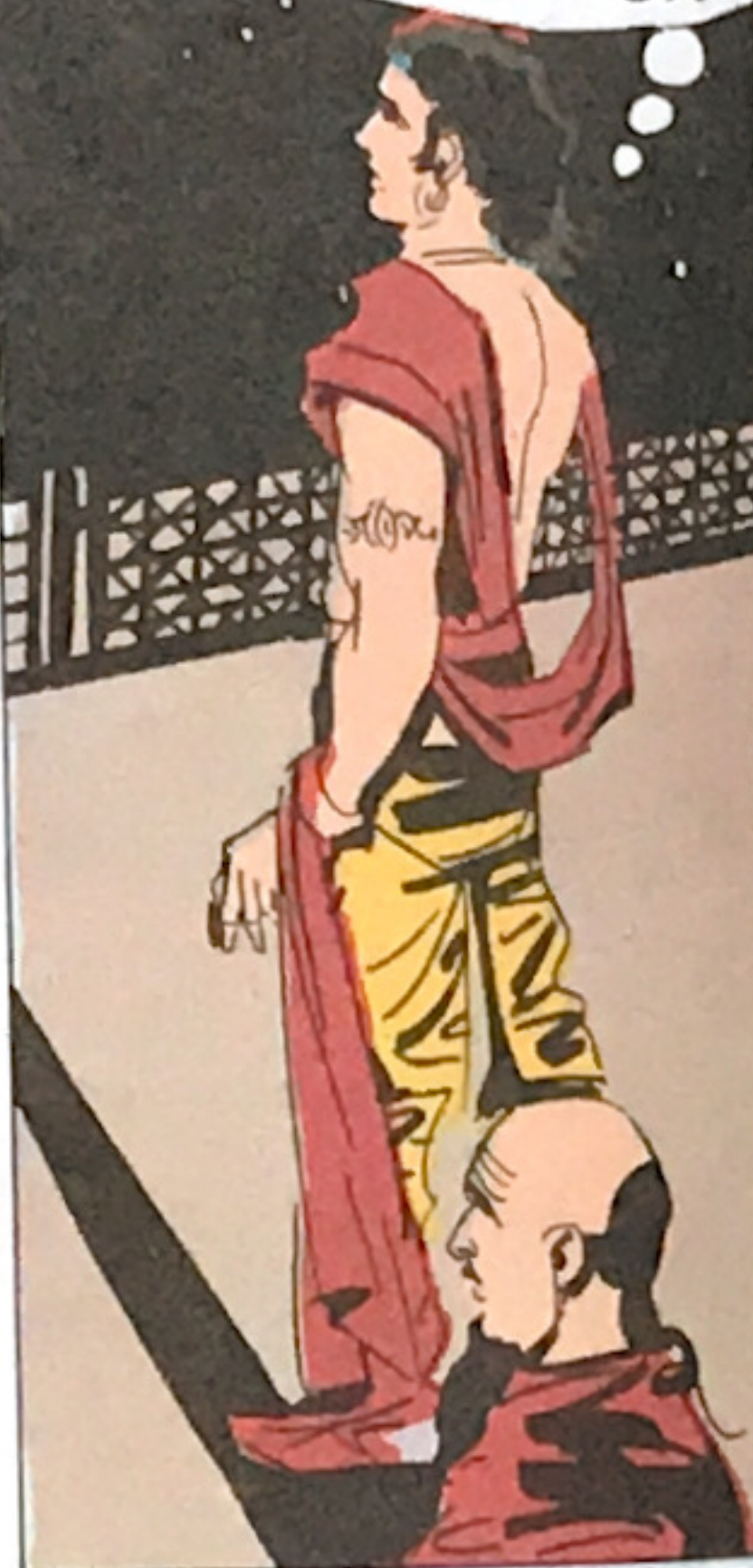


URVASHI WAS PUZZLED.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND ALL THAT IS GOING ON. BUT HER WORDS MAKE ME FEEL PURE AND FULL OF CONFIDENCE. I KNOW HE LOVES HIS WIFE AND YET I CANNOT BEAR TO GIVE HIM UP.



SHE'S GONE. OH! I WISH MY URVASHI WERE HERE NOW.



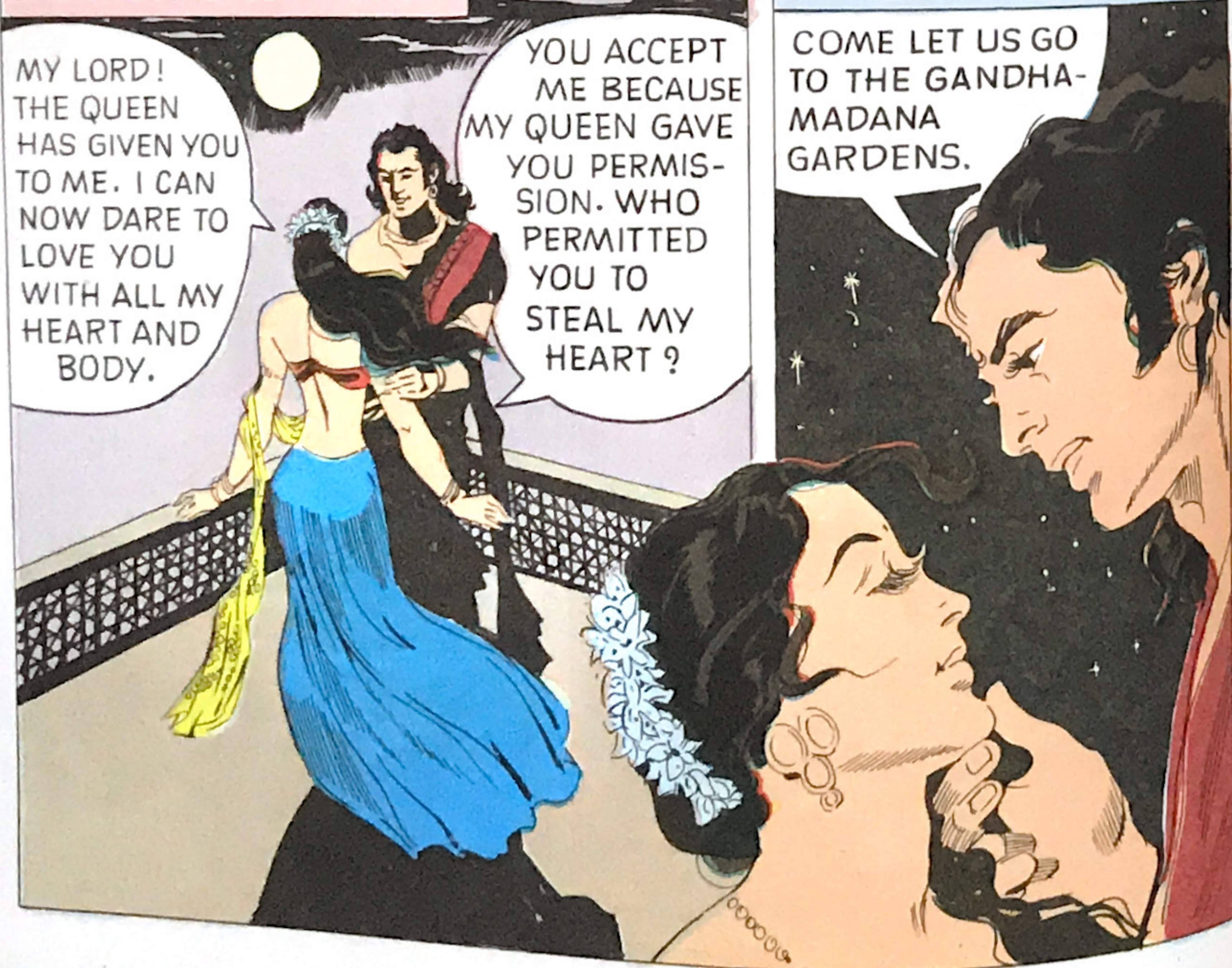
URVASHI WAS FILLED WITH A NEW BOLDNESS. SHE MADE HERSELF VISIBLE.

MY LORD! THE QUEEN HAS GIVEN YOU TO ME. I CAN NOW DARE TO LOVE YOU WITH ALL MY HEART AND BODY.

YOU ACCEPT ME BECAUSE MY QUEEN GAVE YOU PERMISSION. WHO PERMITTED YOU TO STEAL MY HEART?

URVASHI WAS TOO BASHFUL TO ANSWER HIM.

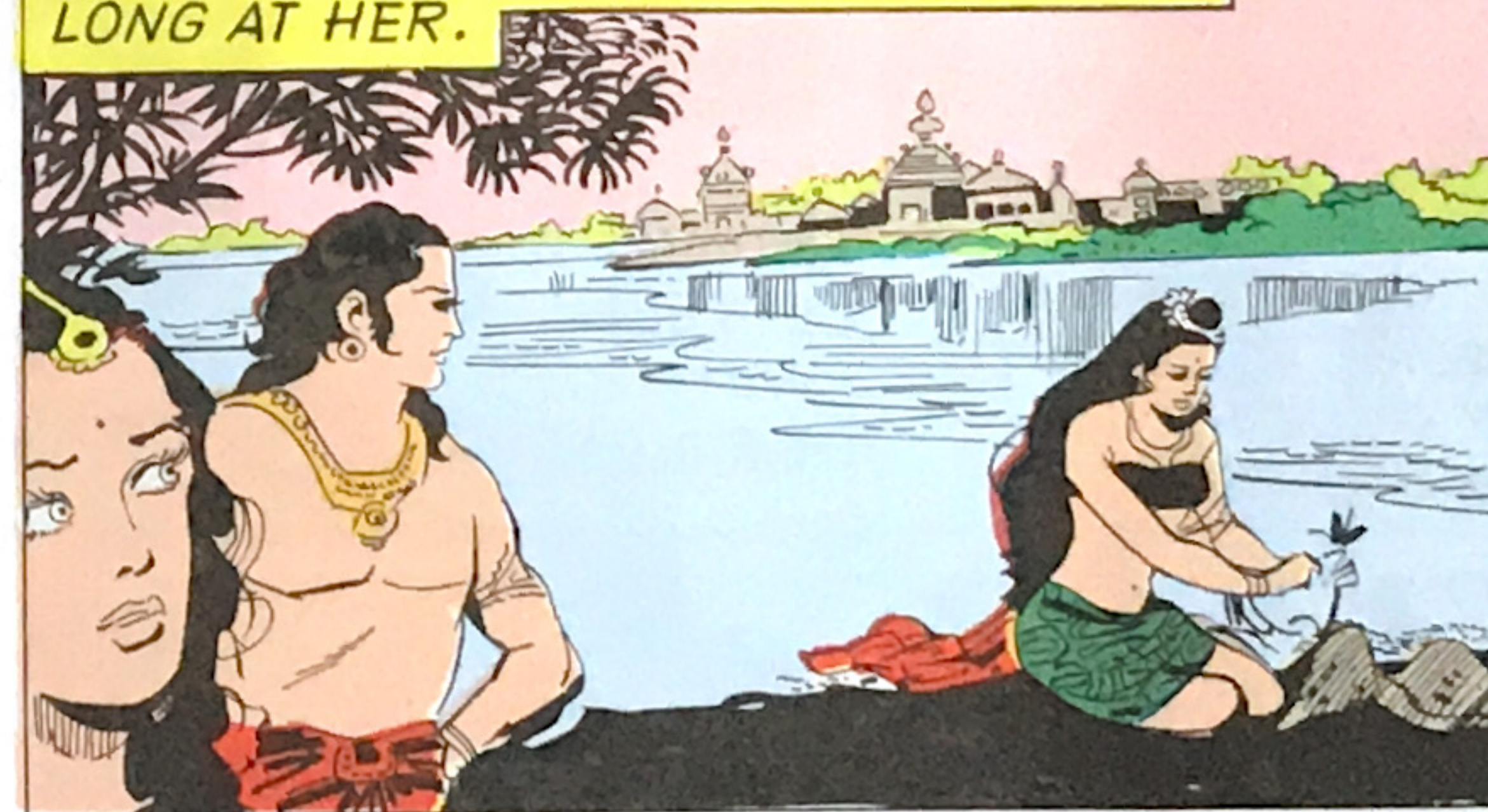
COME LET US GO TO THE GANDHAMADANA GARDENS.



URVASHI AND PURURAVAS SPENT MANY HAPPY SEASONS IN GANDHAMADANA.



ONE DAY PURURAVAS SAW A BEAUTIFUL GIRL BY THE BANK OF A RIVER AND GAZED LONG AT HER.



URVASHI WAS SUDDENLY SEIZED WITH A FIT OF JEALOUS ANGER.



MY LORD IS CHARMED BY ANOTHER. HE NO LONGER LOVES ME!

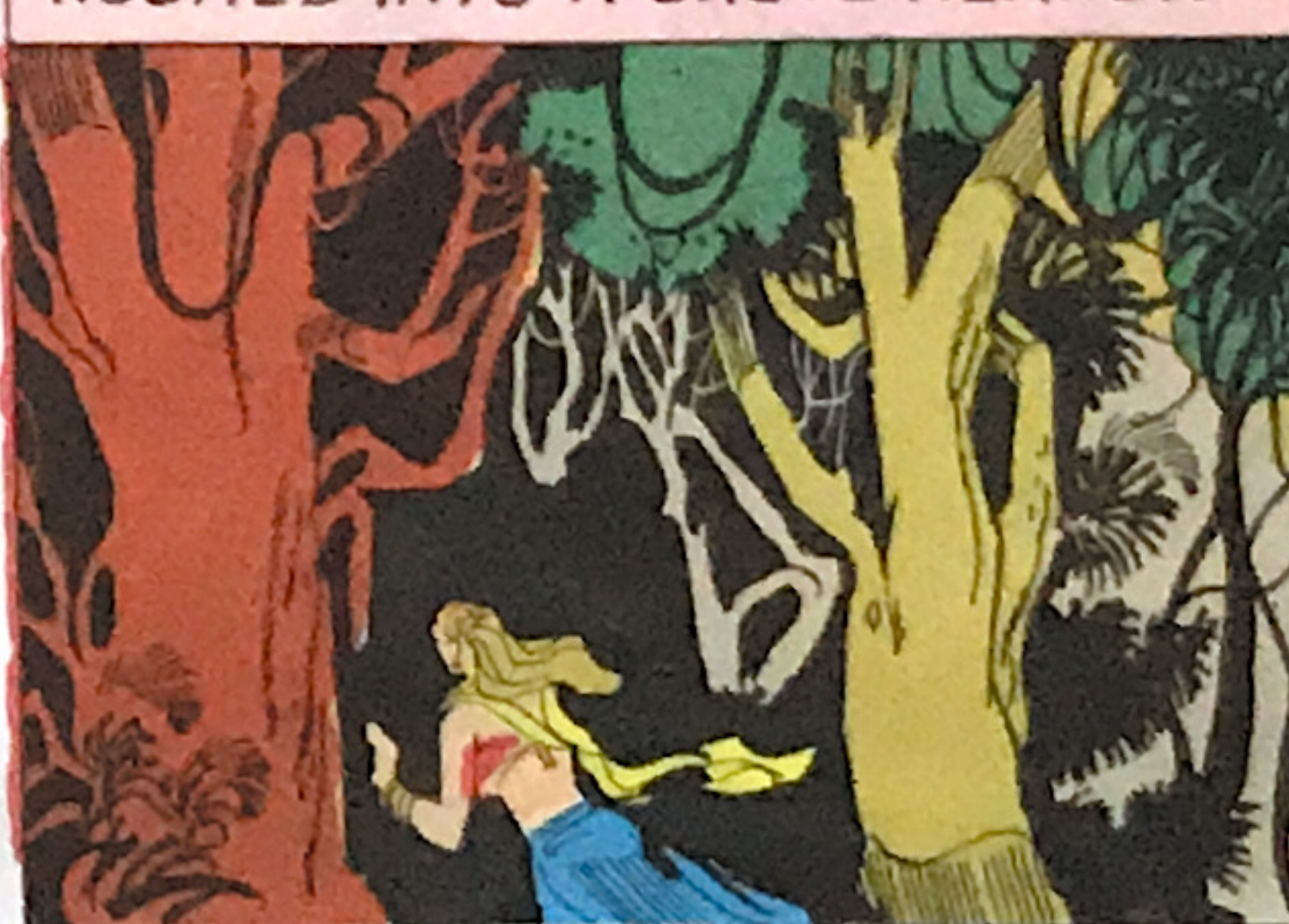
SHE TURNED UPON HIM IN ANGER.

YOU ARE WELCOME TO JOIN HER. I'M GOING.

URVASHI! WAIT! BE REASONABLE.



BUT PUSHING HIM ASIDE, URVASHI RUSHED INTO A GROVE NEARBY.



SUDDENLY-

ALAS! ALAS!
IN MY HASTE I'VE
ENTERED THE
WAR-LORD'S FOR-
BIDDEN GROVE.
O MY LORD!
SAVE ME....

THE GROVE BELONGED TO KARTIKEYA, THE
WAR-LORD AND WOMEN WERE FORBIDDEN
FROM ENTERING IT. IF THEY DID, THEY WERE
STRAIGHTAWAY TURNED INTO CREEPERS.

PURURAVAS MEAN-
WHILE SEARCHED IN
VAIN FOR URVASHI.
HE WANDERED AS ONE
MAD, FOR SEVERAL
DAYS, APPEALING
TO ALL OF NATURE
TO HELP HIM FIND
HIS LOST LOVE.

BUT ALL WAS NOT LOST.
THERE WAS A WAY OUT,
FOR KARTIKEYA HAD
SAID-

IF A JEWEL
FORMED OUT
OF THE CRIMSON
DYE DRIPPING
FROM MY MOTHER'S
FEET, TOUCHES THE
WOMAN-TURNED-
CREEPER, SHE
WILL REGAIN
HER OLD FORM.

ONE DAY -

000
AH! A CRIMSON JEW-
EL! BUT OF WHAT USE
IS IT TO ME NOW? MY
URVASHI IS NOT HERE
TO WEAR IT.

HE TRIED TO WALK AWAY BUT-

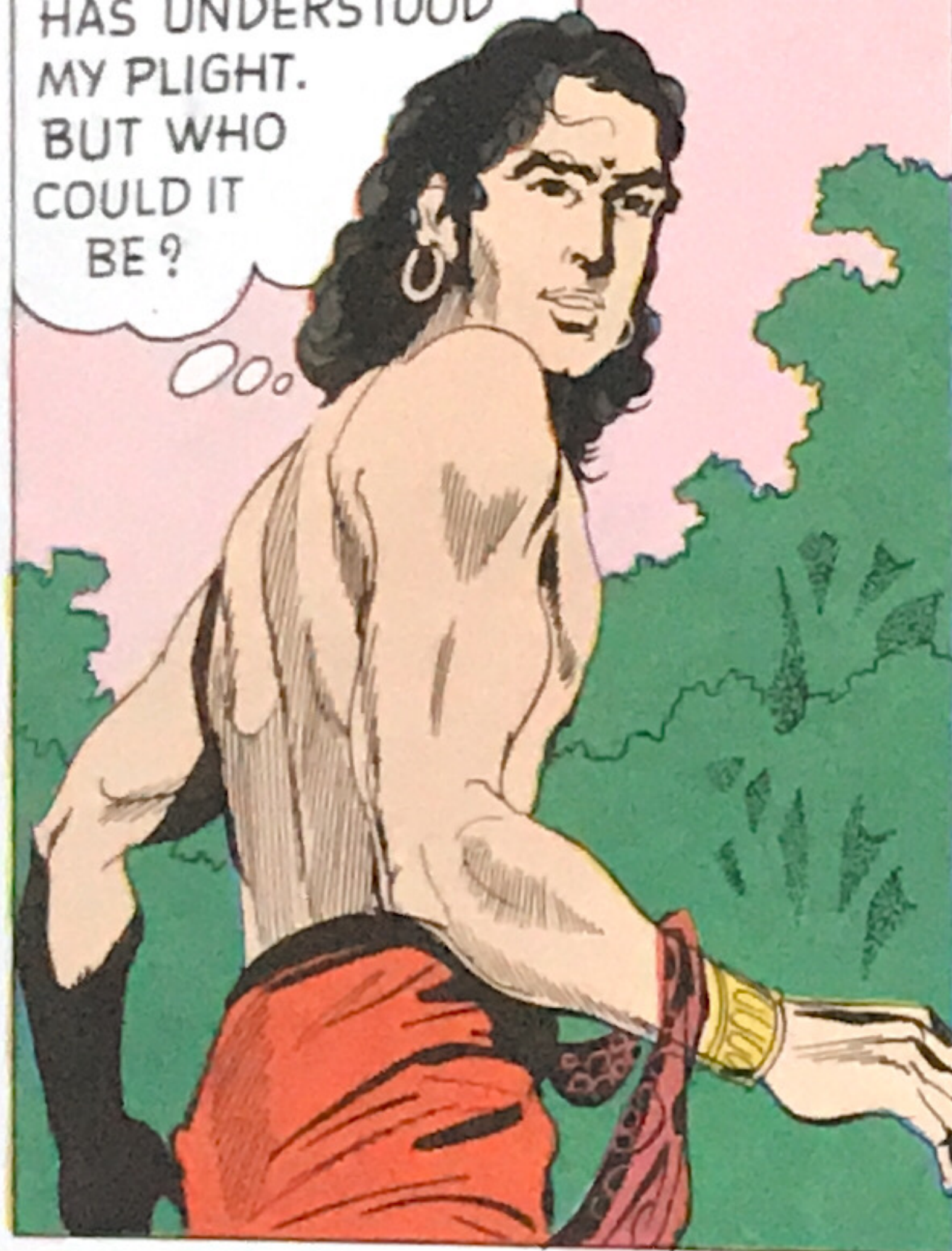
000
SOME STRANGE
POWER
DRAWS ME TO
IT. YET, WHY
SHOULD I PICK
IT UP?

A VOICE FROM ABOVE SUDDENLY CALLED OUT.

DON'T IGNORE THE
JEWEL. PICK IT UP.
THE ONE WHO OWNS IT
IS SOON UNITED WITH
A LOST LOVE.

PURURAVAS COULD NOT BELIEVE HIS EARS.

AT LAST SOMEONE HAS UNDERSTOOD MY PLIGHT. BUT WHO COULD IT BE?



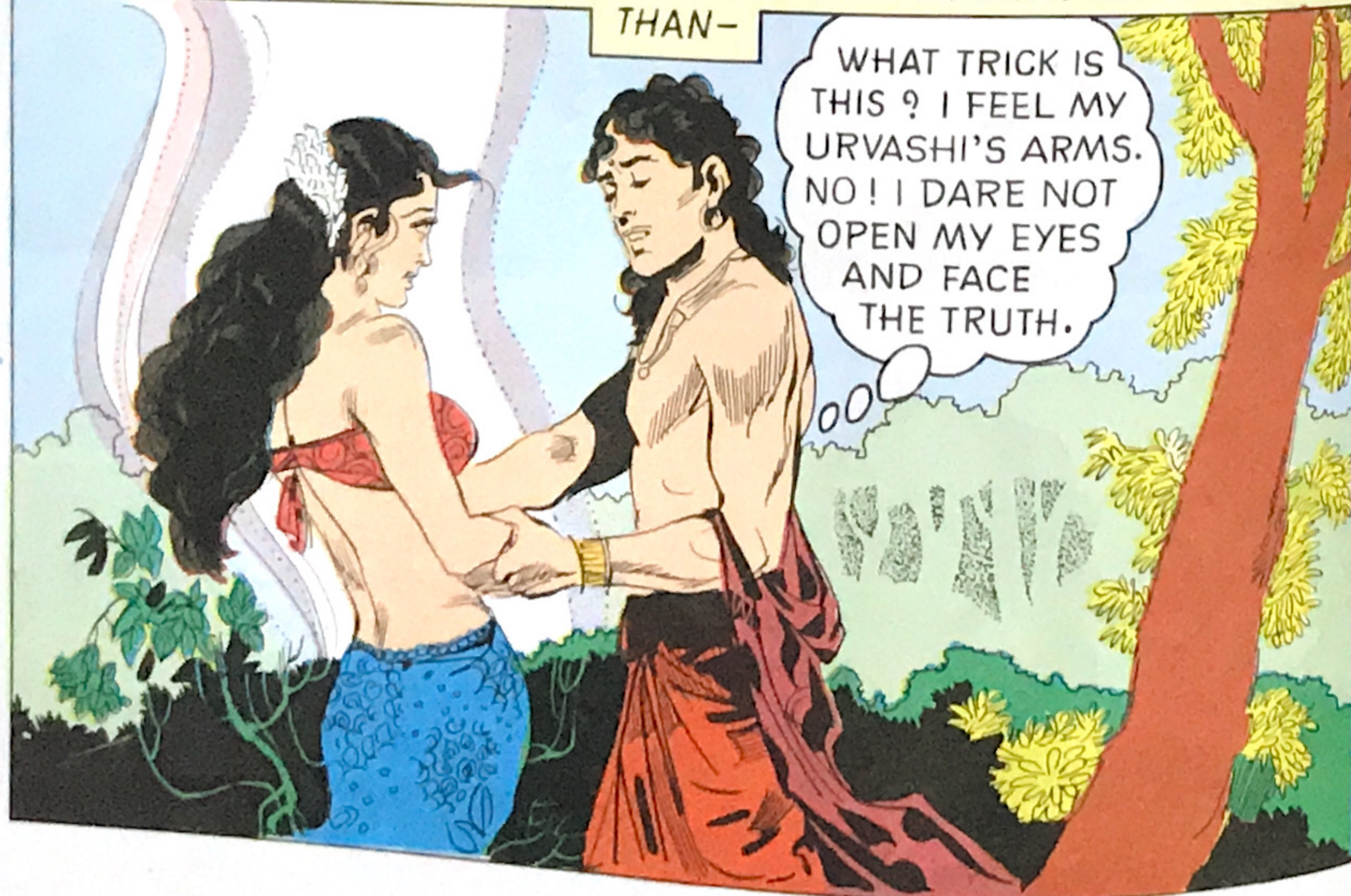
AS HE LIFTED HIS EYES, HE SAW BEFORE HIM A FLOWERLESS, FORLORN CREEPER.

AH! POOR WAN CREEPER. YOU REMIND ME OF MY URVASHI.



NO SOONER HAD PURURAVAS ENCIRCLED THE CREEPER WITH HIS HANDS THAN—

WHAT TRICK IS THIS? I FEEL MY URVASHI'S ARMS. NO! I DARE NOT OPEN MY EYES AND FACE THE TRUTH.



INDEED, THE CREEPER WAS URVASHI.

MY LORD! OPEN YOUR EYES! PLEASE!

URVASHI! YOU! WHERE DID YOU GO? HOW COULD YOU HAVE TREATED ME SO?



URVASHI WAS ABOUT TO SAY SOMETHING WHEN SHE SAW THE JEWEL.

SHE EXPLAINED IT ALL TO A BEWILDERED PURURAVAS. THEN—

THE JEWEL OF REUNION! NOW I KNOW HOW I REGAINED MY FORM AS SOON AS YOU EMBRACED ME!



COME LET US RETURN TO YOUR PALACE. YOU HAVE BEEN AWAY A LONG TIME. PEOPLE WILL BLAME ME.



ABSENT FOR LONG, THE KING RETURNED TO A JUBILANT WELCOME IN THE CITY.

WHAT A WELCOME! THE KING HAS AT LAST RETURNED. EVERYONE IS HAPPY.

MANAVAKA HAD ONLY ONE LAMENT.

IF ONLY THE KING HAD A SON AND HEIR, OUR CITY WOULD WANT NOTHING.

AS MANAVAKA MUSED THUS, A MAID RAN UP TO HIM.

ALAS! CURSED WRETCH THAT I AM. AS I WAS CARRYING THE MAGIC JEWEL FOR THE APSARA A VULTURE FLEW DOWN AND SNATCHED IT.

WHAT! THE JEWEL GONE? THE KING'S MOST PRECIOUS POSSESSION LOST? I MUST GO TO HIM.

MANAVAKA RAN UP TO PURURAVAS.

THERE FLIES THE THIEF. WHY DON'T YOU SHOOT HIM DOWN?

I CANNOT. HE IS OUT OF REACH OF MY ARROW.

PURURAVAS CALLED HIS CHAMBERLAIN TO HIM.

THE THIEF MUST RETURN TO HIS NEST IN THE EVENING. TRACK HIM DOWN.

IT SHALL BE DONE, SIR.

AND THE CHAMBERLAIN LEFT.

BUT HE SOON RETURNED.

SEE WHAT I HAVE HERE. THE BIRD WAS SHOT DEAD BY THIS ARROW AND I HAVE RETRIEVED THE JEWEL.

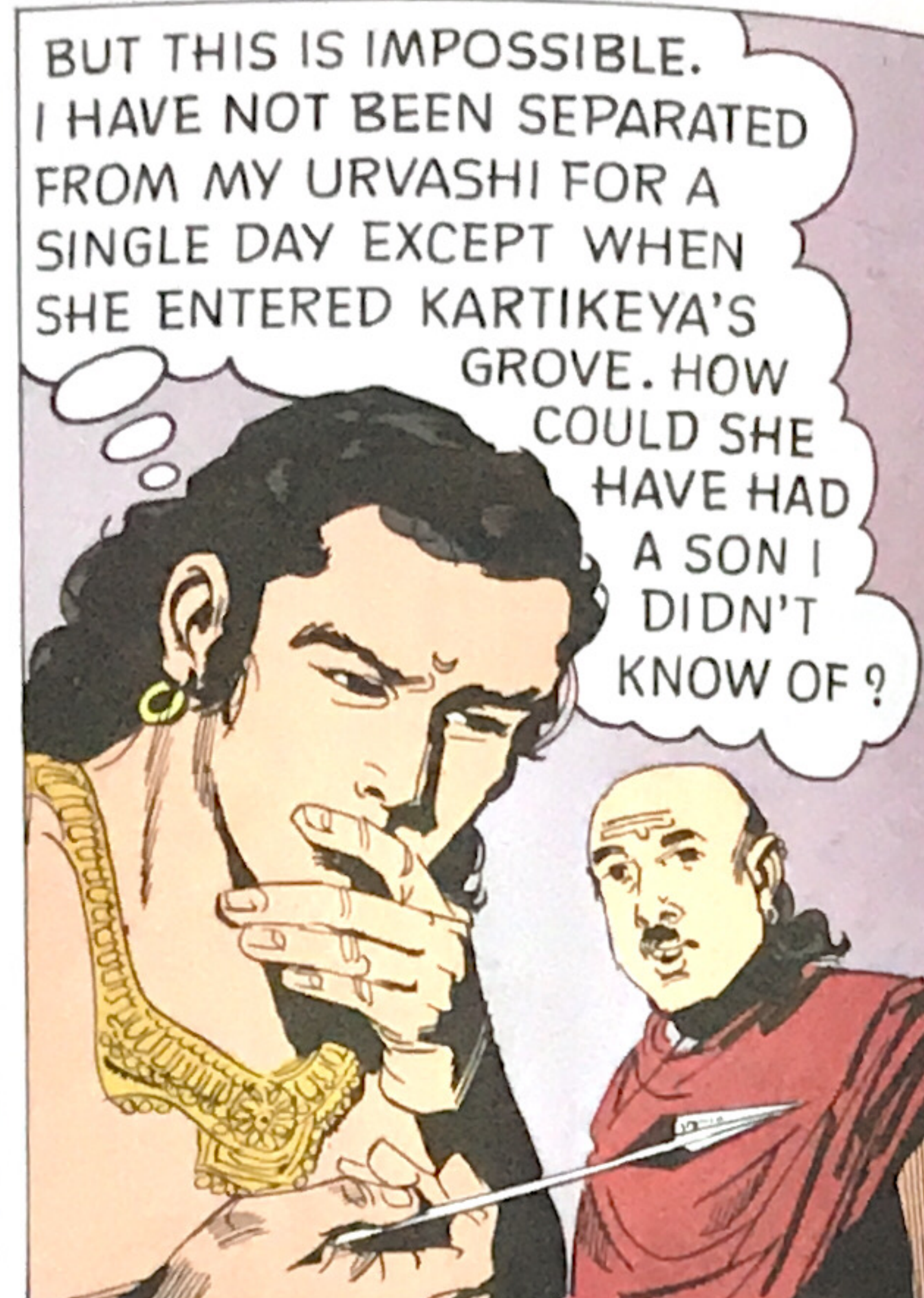
WHOSE ARROW IS IT?

THE OWNER'S NAME IS CARVED HERE. BUT MY EYES ARE FEEBLE. I CAN'T READ IT.



WONDER OF WONDERS! THIS ARROW WAS SHOT BY AYUS THE SON OF URVASHI AND PURURAVAS.

MY FRIEND, A SON! WHAT MORE DO YOU WANT?



BUT THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE. I HAVE NOT BEEN SEPARATED FROM MY URVASHI FOR A SINGLE DAY EXCEPT WHEN SHE ENTERED KARTIKEYA'S GROVE. HOW COULD SHE HAVE HAD A SON I DIDN'T KNOW OF?

JUST THEN THE CHAMBERLAIN RE-ENTERED.

SIR, SATYAVATI, A HERMITESS FROM SAGE CHYAVANA'S ASHRAM WOULD LIKE TO SEE YOU. SHE HAS A BOY WITH HER.

BRING THEM IN AT ONCE.

AS THEY ENTERED -

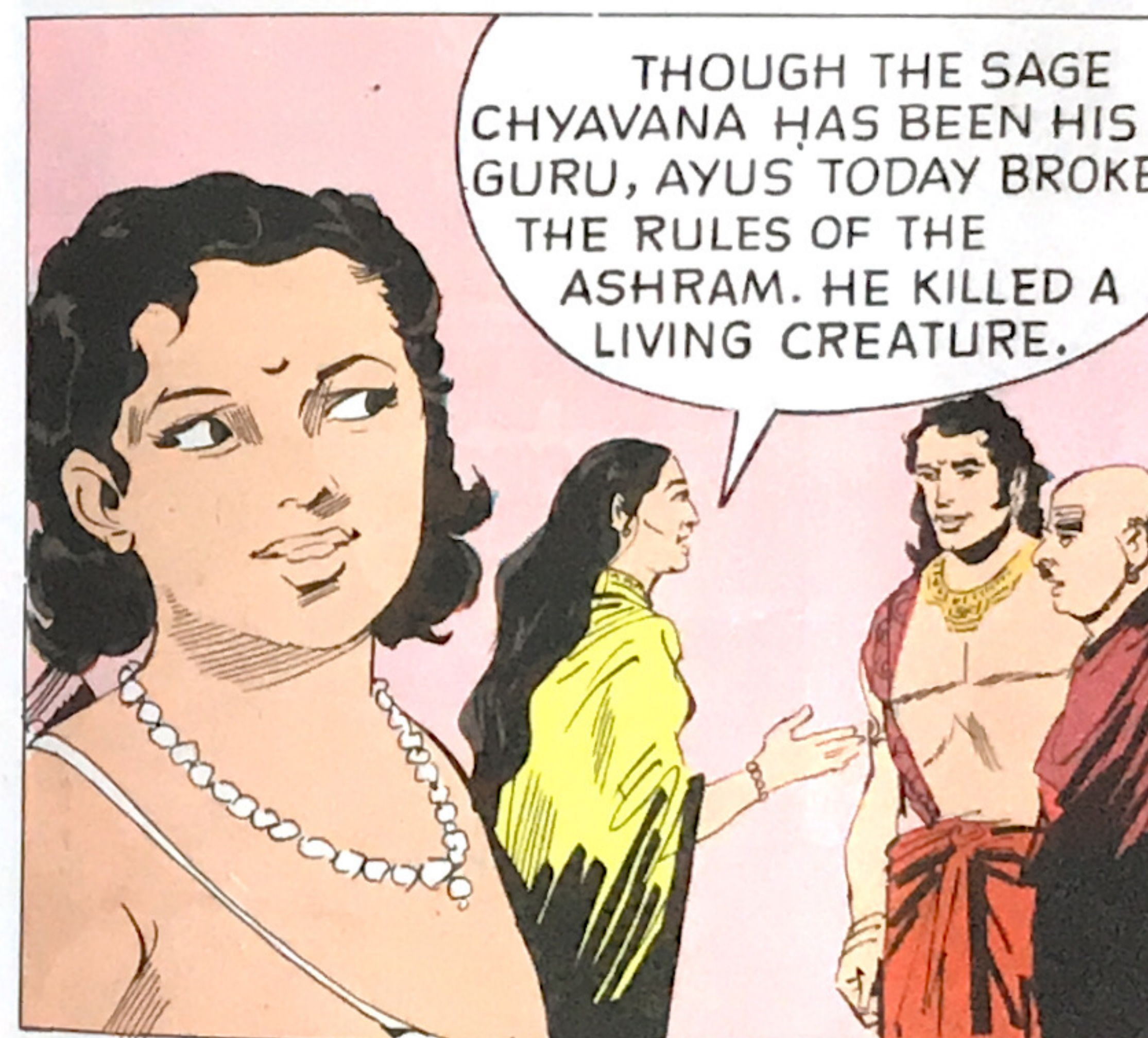
WHY, HE IS A REPLICA OF YOU! HE MUST BE THE BOY WHO SHOT THE ARROW - YOUR SON.

HE MUST BE. HOW I LONG TO HOLD HIM IN MY ARMS.

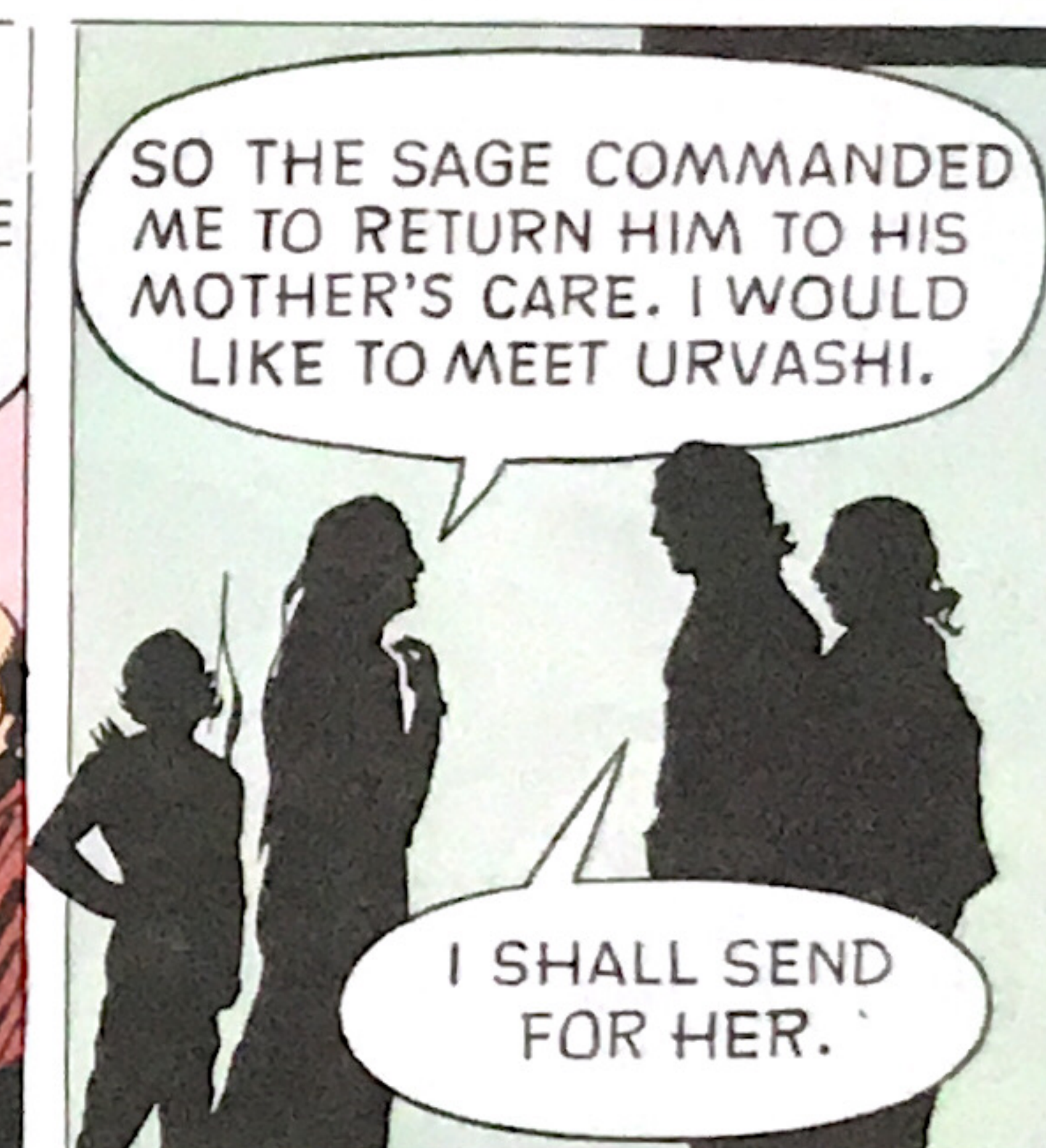


WELCOME, MOTHER! I AM ANXIOUS TO KNOW THE PURPOSE OF YOUR VISIT.

I KNOW NOT WHY, BUT URVASHI HAD HANDED AYUS TO MY CARE THE DAY HE WAS BORN.

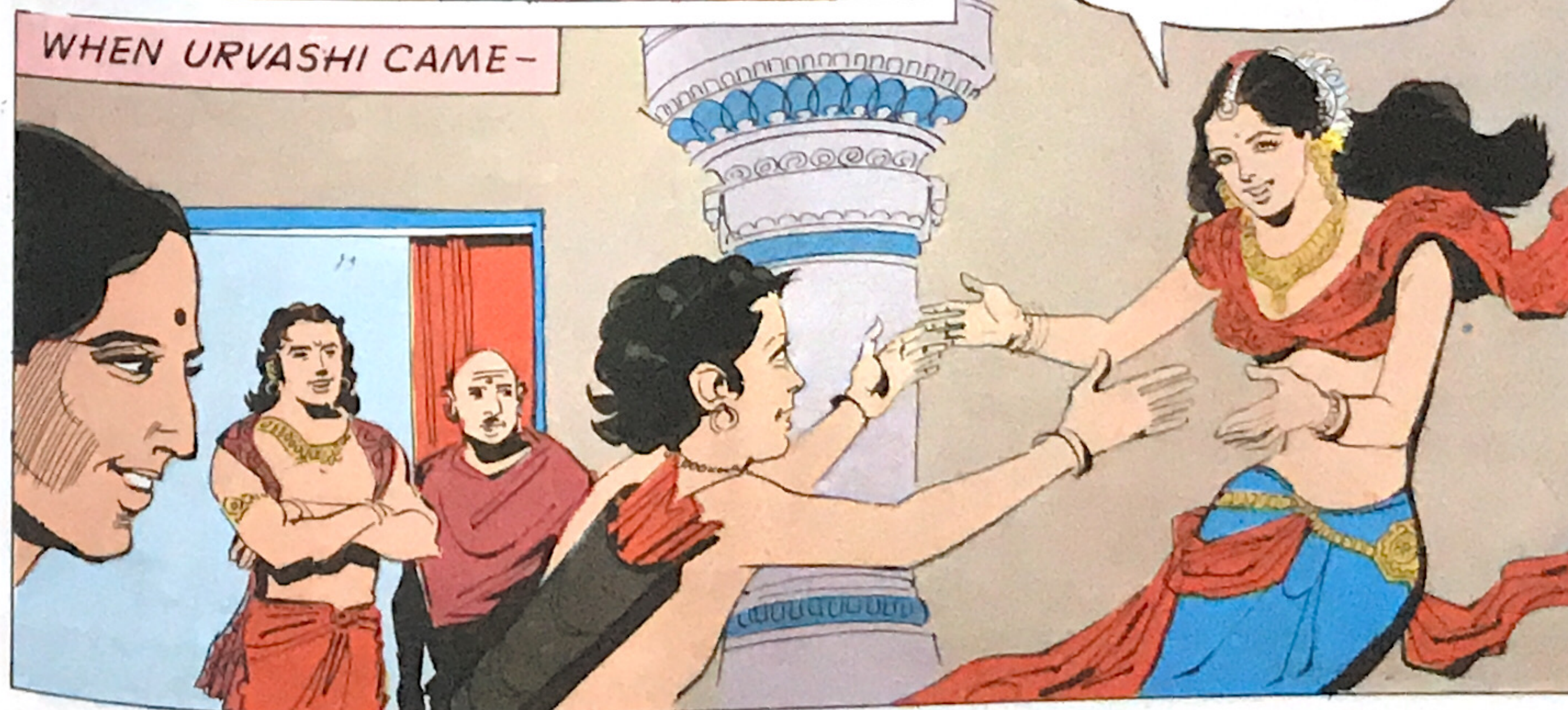


THOUGH THE SAGE CHYAVANA HAS BEEN HIS GURU, AYUS TODAY BROKE THE RULES OF THE ASHRAM. HE KILLED A LIVING CREATURE.



SO THE SAGE COMMANDED ME TO RETURN HIM TO HIS MOTHER'S CARE. I WOULD LIKE TO MEET URVASHI.

I SHALL SEND FOR HER.



WHEN URVASHI CAME -

AYUS! MY SON!

SATYAVATI TOOK LEAVE OF PURURAVAS AND URVASHI AND WAS ABOUT TO GO WHEN—



MOTHER, TAKE ME WITH YOU.

I CAN'T, MY SON. YOU MUST NOW LIVE WITH YOUR FATHER AND REIGN AFTER HIM.



I WILL, MY SON. PEACE BE WITH ALL OF YOU.

THEN MOTHER, WILL YOU SEND MY PET PEACOCK TO ME?

THEN URVASHI TOLD PURURAVAS ABOUT THE CONDITION LAID DOWN BY INDRA.

... NOW I WILL HAVE TO GO BACK. THIS IS MY LAST HOUR WITH YOU.



WHEN SATYAVATI LEFT—

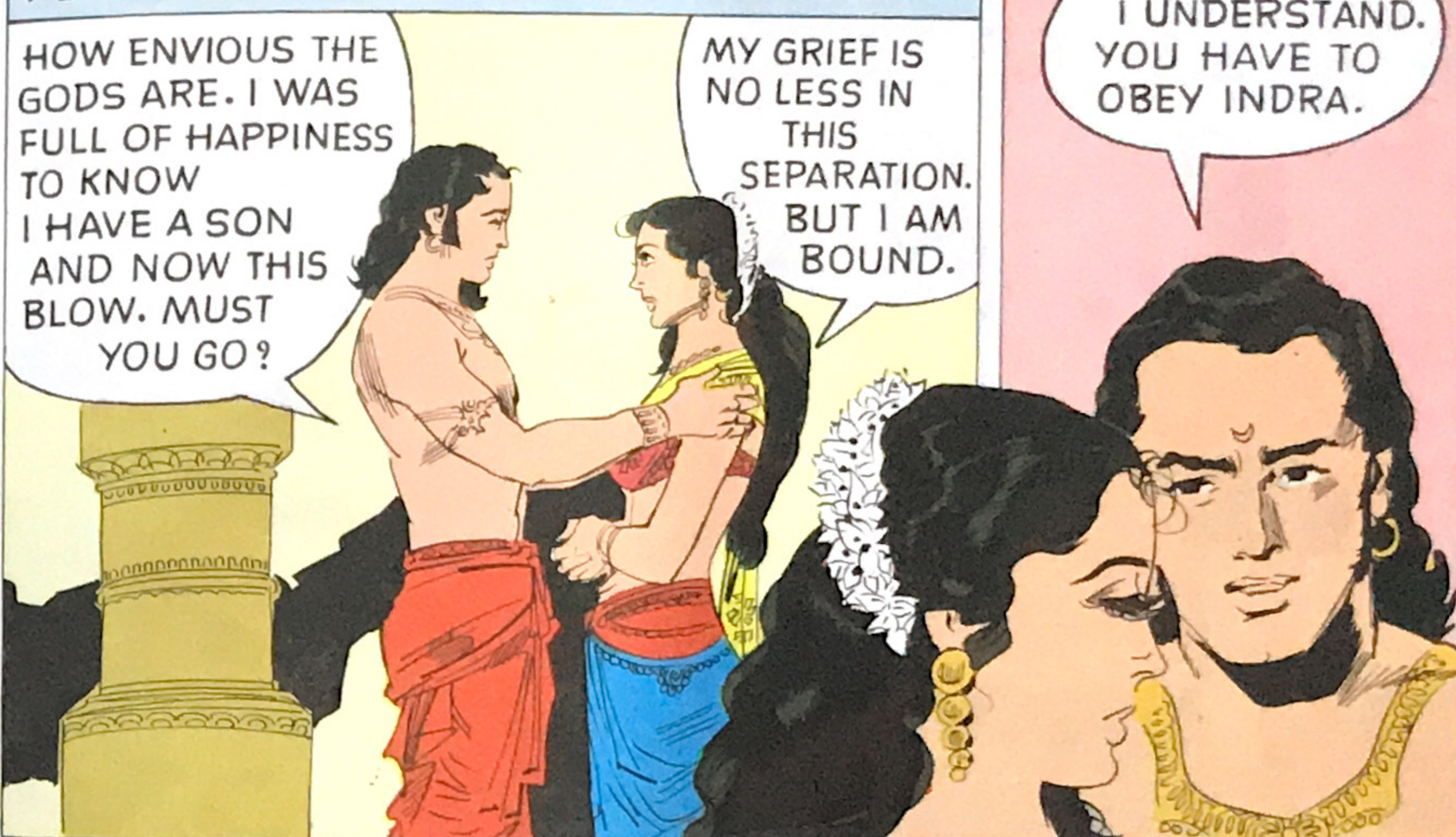
WHY, WHAT'S THE MATTER? THIS IS THE HAPPIEST DAY OF MY LIFE AND YOU GRIEVE.



I HAD FORGOTTEN MYSELF IN A MOTHER'S JOY...

PURURAVAS WAS STUNNED BY HER WORDS.

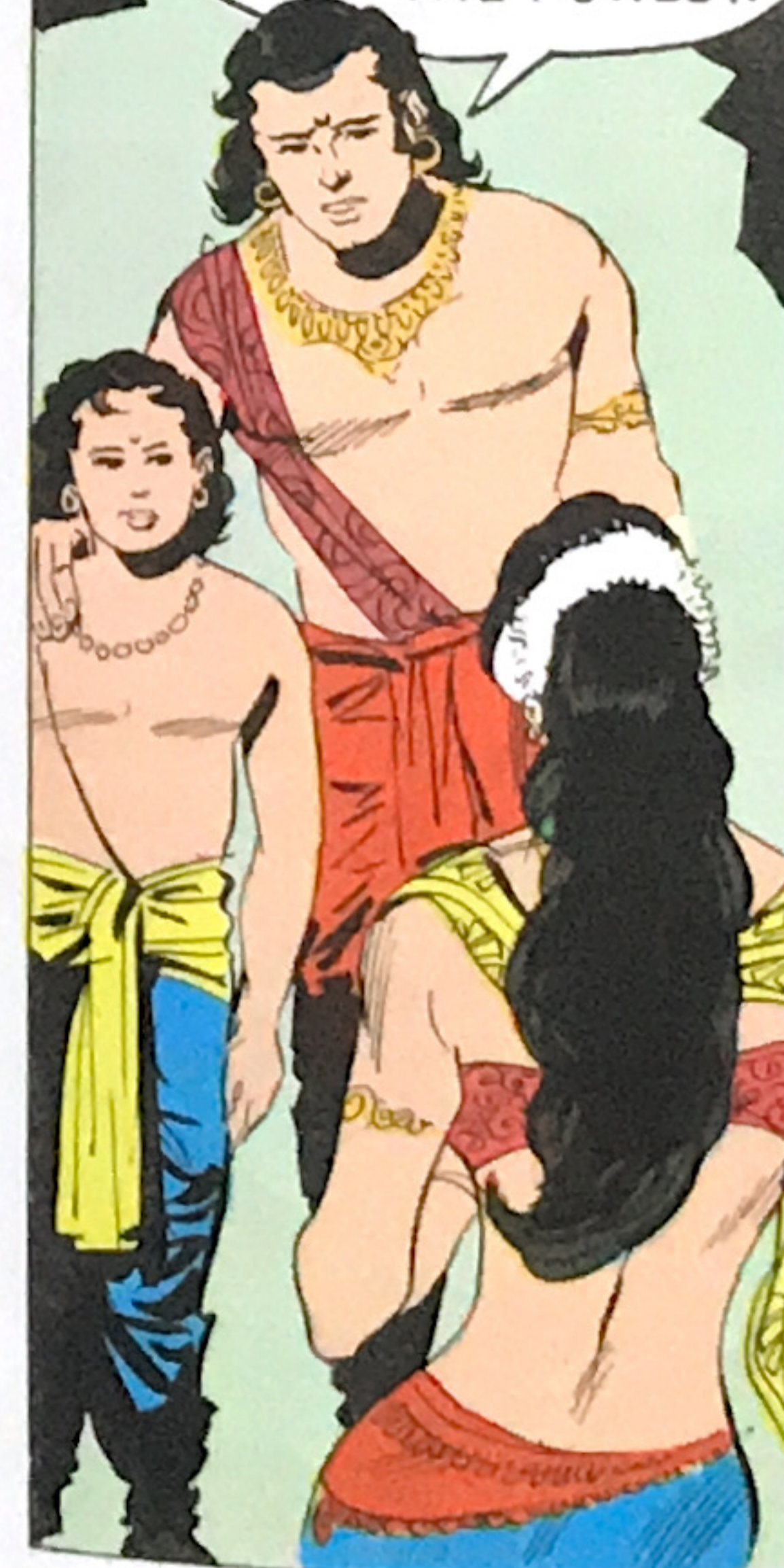
HOW ENVIOUS THE GODS ARE. I WAS FULL OF HAPPINESS TO KNOW I HAVE A SON AND NOW THIS BLOW. MUST YOU GO?



MY GRIEF IS NO LESS IN THIS SEPARATION. BUT I AM BOUND.

I UNDERSTAND. YOU HAVE TO OBEY INDRA.

AS FOR ME, I SHALL CROWN AYUS KING, AND RETIRE TO THE FOREST.



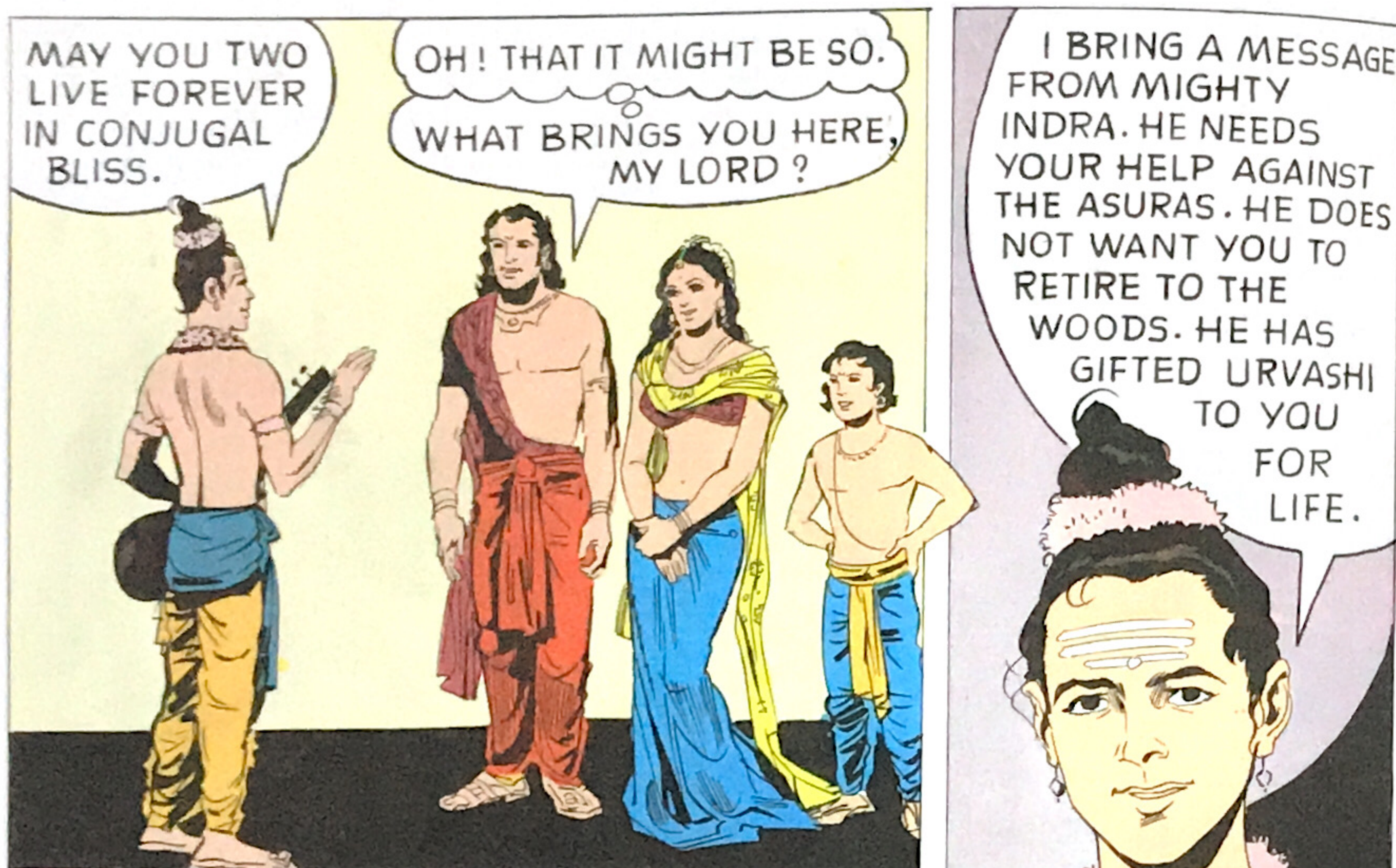
JUST THEN A SUDDEN FLASH LIT THE SKY AND NARADA DESCENDED TO EARTH.

GREETINGS, LORD NARADA.

HAIL PURURAVAS, GREAT GUARDIAN OF THE EARTH!

MY RESPECTS, LORD.





WHEN PURURAVAS AND URVASHI HEARD THIS -

IN ALL I AM INDRA'S GRATEFUL SERVANT.



NARADA RETURNED TO THE HEAVENS. PURURAVAS LIVED HAPPILY WITH URVASHI TILL THE END OF HIS DAYS.



WHICH OF THE ACKS HAVE YOU STILL NOT READ?

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CHURNING OF THE OCEAN
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DHURVA AND ASHTAVAKRA
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DRONA
DURGA, TALES OF
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